

# Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHED 1786 MISSIONARY

# THE PIONEER BAPTIST

*"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"*

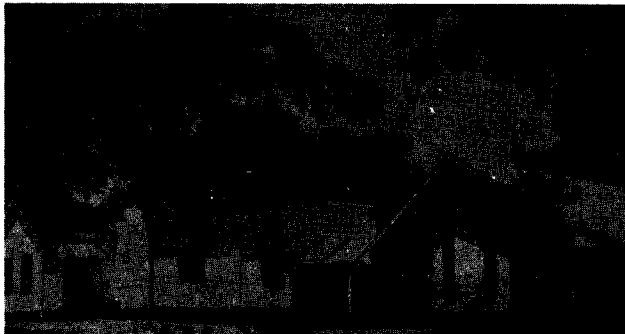
"PERSUADING THEM CONCERNING JESUS"

August 1969

BY: C. D. COLE

"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening". (Acts 28:23)

The Christian ministry is a ministry of persuasion. We cannot force sinners to believe on Christ, neither can we drive saints into the service of Christ. Everything must of necessity be on a voluntary basis. God does not want any kind of service that the heart is not in. He wants all service to be a free expression of the heart and mind. Everybody in Christ's army is an enlisted man. He drafts nobody into his service. He wants slaves in His kingdom, but they must be voluntary slaves from an internal constraint and not from external force.



For the conversion of men to faith in Christ we can do nothing more than give the facts concerning Jesus and pray to God for results as we persuade them to act upon the facts of the gospel--the good news of how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried and rose from the dead the third day according to the scriptures. We cannot force faith from without; faith comes by a work of grace in the human heart and mind, and when this work is wrought by the Holy Spirit, faith is the voluntary attachment to Jesus of Nazareth as both Lord and Christ.

We cannot run a church like an army or a worldly business. The man who works for a coal company is not showing

Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

Sunday School . . . . . 9:45 a.m.  
Worship Service . . . . . 11:00 a.m.  
Evening Service . . . . . 7:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting . . . . . 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

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any love for the firm; he is really working for himself and his family. As an honest man, he will give an honest day's work from a sense of duty, and if he fails, the foreman may demand better work or his resignation.

The words of our text refers to Paul's ministry at Rome among the Jews. On reaching Rome as a prisoner in chains, he is allowed to live in his own hired house in charge of a soldier at all hours. Three days after his arrival, he calls the chief Jews of the city to his house for a conference. He explains the occasion of his presence in Rome. He tells of his experience in Jerusalem and of his appeal to Caesar. He is not there to bring any charge against his nation. He is there for the hope of Israel, that is, he is there as a prisoner because he had preached the gospel of Jesus Christ as the hope of his people. The hope of Israel was not in Christ's second coming, but in his first coming and in what he had done in his death and resurrection.

These prominent Jews tell him they had received no letters from Jerusalem about him, and that no new arrivals from there had spoken any harm of him. But they told him they would like to hear from him because "this sect" as they called the Christians were spoken against everywhere.

They make an appointment with Paul and when the day arrives the Jews are there in great numbers to hear what he has to say.

Our text tells us what he said: "He persuaded them concerning Jesus."

1. His theme was Jesus. He paid no attention to their slur in referring to believers as "this sect."

(a) He did not tell his experiences on his trip. He could have recited a long and interesting story about what happened at various places during his voyage. He could have told of his shipwreck. He could have told of the time he was bitten by a poisonous snake on the island of Melita without injury and how the natives looked upon him as a god. He could have told of the healing of the father of Publius and others on this island, and how the natives had honored him with many honors and gifts.

(b) He did not court their sympathy because he was a prisoner. He wasn't weeping because he was in chains, but happy that he could talk about Jesus. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the apostle was one of the grand proofs of Christianity. He once thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth, but the time came when this same Jesus meant everything to him. He could say, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." He gladly called himself a bondsman to Jesus Christ.

(c) He did not talk about politics, or economics, or social matters. He didn't waste his time talking about Caesar and the cruelty of the Roman government.

(d) He talked to them about Jesus. His heart was full of this one sub-

ject and what was in his heart came forth from his lips. He knew his subject. He had met Jesus and was fully convinced He was the Messiah, the Christ of God, and the one hope of Israel and of all men.

2. His source of information was the Bible--the Old Testament. Our text says, "persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." Everywhere he found texts that applied to Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth was the suffering servant of Jehovah in Isaiah; he was the Lord our righteousness in Jeremiah; he was David's Lord and Shepherd in the 23rd Psalm. Some people do not like the Old Testament, but the Old Testament was the only Bible Paul had in those days.

3. The length of his message: All day--from morning till evening. This does not necessarily justify long sermons today, but Paul made the most of his opportunity.

4. The manner of his preaching: He expounded, that is, explained the scriptures and showed their fulfillment in Christ. Explanation of scripture or teaching is important in preaching. He testified, that is, he gave his personal conviction about the kingdom of God. He persuaded. He did not give cold bare facts without any care of whether they received them or not. He was persuasive. He wanted them to believe in Jesus. He was not mad at anybody. He did not want to harm anyone. He wanted to help the people.

But he was also in earnest. He realized the danger sinners were in and wanted them to see no hope except in Jesus. A man once took his doctor's prescription to his druggist for his sick wife. A while after filling it, the druggist discovered he had made a terrible mistake--he had put too much of a sleeping potion in the medicine. Realizing that if the woman took it and ever went to sleep, she could never be aroused. He hurried to the home of the man with the sad news and instructed him by any and every way to not let his wife go to sleep--that it would mean her death. He told him if she could be kept awake until the crisis passed, she would be all right. You know what this man did? He kept her awake. He walked her around while she begged him to let her lie down and sleep. He threw water in her face. And when it seemed she would go to sleep in spite of all he could do, he slapped her in the face. Why such seeming cruelty? Because he was angry at her? No, because he loved her and was interested in her. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22, 23).

This is a natural illustration of the earnestness we should show in persuading people concerning Jesus. Pulling them out of the fire is not done physically. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10, 11).

5. The results of his preaching? Some believed and some believed not. This is always the case. From scripture and observation, no preacher can hope everybody who hears him will be saved.

Why will men not believe such a glorious gospel? It is not bad news but good news. It is in their interest that they believe. Then why won't they? It is because of the ruined condition of their mind and heart.

Those who do believe the gospel do so through grace. "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace" (Acts 18:27). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).