

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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

THE MERCY SEAT

"And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." Hebrews 9:5.

If our theme was the mourner's bench we would have no text, for there is not so much as a hint, in the effort to win souls to Christ. Nothing about it in history until a very late date. Its advocates can plead neither

age nor scripture for its use. Old time religion never heard of the mourner's bench method in evangelism. Because some Baptists, in some sections, since 1832, have used it, does not make it an ancient custom. Our children might, with equal propriety, refer to some custom of ours as old-time religion.

But custom in religion, like fashion in society, is hard to break away from. In

this matter we try to be tender and sympathetic, and at the same time firm, and uncompromising. We grew up under the mourner's bench method, as did most of you, no doubt, and because of traditional teaching was strongly prejudiced in its favor. And we reluctantly departed from its use. We here give four reasons for discontinuing it:

I. Not taught in the

MISSION BIBLE CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 4, 5, 6

It's nearing time for our Fourth Annual Mission Bible Conference. Pastor Al Gormley and the Bryan Station Baptist Church extend an invitation to all. Each year the Lord has blessed our conference with good preaching and fellowship. This year's speakers are:

Harold Harvey, Olmstead, Kentucky;
Dan Ferrell, Wilmington, Ohio;
Lonnie Bennett, Frankfort, Kentucky;
Lee Hammell, Bardwell, Kentucky;
Garner Smith, Gracey, Kentucky;
Bill DeRossitt, Georgetown, Kentucky;
Elton Dunbar, Leesville, South Carolina;
Eugene Clark, Paducah, Kentucky;
Coy Cox, Independence, Kentucky;
Robert Ginn, Florence, Kentucky;
Luther Rogers, Mt. Morris, Michigan;
Leroy Pack, Chesapeake, Ohio;
George Kelley, Maceo, Kentucky;
and Parvin Hall, Cairo, Illinois.

If overnight accommodations are needed, our members welcome you to their homes. Local motels are also available. Please let us know in advance and we will be ready for your arrival. An evening meal will be served from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Monday, November 4, to all our guests arriving early. Breakfast, noon, and evening meals will be served at the church on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 5 and 6.

Our church is located off New Circle Road (KY 4), 3-3/10 miles out the Bryan Station Road (KY 956). Turn right on the Briar Hill Road, and the church is 200 yards on the left.

We are anxiously awaiting this time of fellowship with God's people! Make plans to attend!

Bible. We ask for only one passage where the preacher invited a sinner to the mourner's bench. People need to be careful in their criticism of a man who fails to use a method that is without Scriptural sanction.

II. Inconsistent to use the mourner's bench method two or three weeks in the year, and another method the rest of the year. And this is what practically all mourner's bench advocates do. If it will be helpful two weeks it will be helpful every week. This thing has put us into a rut, and our people have come to where they expect nobody to be saved except during a protracted meeting when such method is used.

III. The mourner's bench is not a good place to instruct the sinner. In altar work there is usually more or less noise and disturbance that hinders in the work of instruction. The sermon itself is for the purpose of instructing sinners how to be saved.

IV. It is a good place to work up a feeling, and I am constrained to believe that is why it is used. Many a soul has experienced a good feeling, by having their fleshly emotions stirred when Christ had not been trusted at all. The mourner's bench and altar work, with its bedlam of noise and confusion and false teaching, has, we verily believe, deceived many a soul.

The only method to be employed in evangelism is to preach the gospel. "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I Corinthians 1:21. No record in the New Testament where any kind of a proposition was given. The preachers delivered their messages, and some believed and some disbelieved. We are not told how

those who believed made it known, but they did, and believers will always make it known. When Saul was converted on the Damascus highway, he straightway preached the gospel in the synagogue at Damascus, and when driven out of this place, he went to Jerusalem and tried to join the church, but they would not receive him until Barnabas vouched for him. Acts 9:1-31. They remembered him only as the persecutor, and were afraid of him. If modern methods had been employed in those days he would have had no difficulty at all in getting in. A woman once said that the gospel would not save today, and if nothing else was done, nobody would ever be saved. But Paul said that the gospel, the bare gospel--not the gospel and, but the gospel only, was the power of God unto salvation.

Now, while it is true the Bible has nothing to say about a mourner's bench, it does have much to say about a mercy-seat. For your learning, we will propound and answer three questions about the mercy-seat of the New Testament.

I. What is the mercy-seat? This question supposes an object of misery and danger. It implies that man deserves punishment at the hands of a sin-hating and sin-avenging God. A mercy-seat is a place where mercy may be found--a place of propitiation, where the anger of God against the sinner is appeased. If God was only a God of justice, eternal damnation would be the doom of everyone of us. But, He is plenteous in mercy as well as mighty in justice, and He has set forth a mercy-seat to which hell-deserving sinners may repair for mercy and salvation.

Under the Old Testament economy, the mercy-seat was the covering to the ark of the covenant, and upon it was the blood sprinkled on the great day of atonement. But, this was blood of bulls and goats that could not take away sin, and its only value was as a type--it pointed the true mercy-seat, and to the precious blood of God's lamb. There is only one true mercy-seat, and this is not a seat of wood or stone. The true mercy-seat is a person--the Lord Jesus Christ, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (mercy - seat) through faith in his blood,..." Romans 3:25. Away from this mercy-seat, men are in danger of hell-fire, for God out of Christ is a consuming fire. Poor, weak, frail sinners can find mercy with God only by coming to His son, who is the propitiation (mercy-seat) "for our sins: and not for our's only, but for the sins of the whole world," I John 2:2. Christ is not a tribal Saviour. There is but one mercy-seat for all men. The sinner in China must come to the same seat as the sinner in America. For the Christ rejecter, everywhere, there is "nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Remember that God's anger against sin must be appeased, and this can only be done by rendering satisfaction to His justice. His justice is unrelenting, and the sinner cannot be saved at the expense of justice.

Our good works cannot save us because they do not satisfy the demands of the law. As a means of propitiating God, they are nothing more than filthy rags. Our mourning cannot save us for the same reason. Suppose I commit a crime and am found guilty; will all the crying and mourning that I can do, satisfy the law, and call for

Psalm 92:1, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."

Many times we do not appreciate the greatest blessings of life until they are withheld from us. This was true of Philip Nolan, the fictitious army officer in Edward Everett Hale's story, "The Man Without a Country." Early in the 1800's, Nolan, in a fit of anger, told a military court that he never wanted to hear of the United States again. Nolan was sentenced to have his wish fulfilled. He was to spend the rest of his life at sea, never to touch an American port or to be given any news about the United States. As the years passed, he lived to deeply regret his rash statement and to long for any reminder of his home, his family, or his native land. His exile taught him the true meaning of patriotism.

Oftentimes, we as God's children become so caught up in our daily schedules that we neglect to stop and reflect on the bountiful mercies which God has shown us. We don't really enjoy the blessings or realize how precious they are until one is taken away from us. Let's learn to thank the Lord for everyday blessings, such as a healthy body, the members of our family, and the country in which we live. Today, let's bless the Lord for His goodness to us!

A FENCE OR A HOSPITAL

One state passed a law forbidding the Bible to be read in the public schools, and the same state passed another law requiring that a Bible be placed in every prison cell in the state. What reasoning! A fence at the top of the cliff is much better than a hospital at the bottom.

"spare him." Wisdom comes leading one like unto the son of man, and says, "deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom," and at the cross, mercy and truth met together and righteousness and peace kissed each other.

III. How is the sinner to reach the mercy-seat? What is he to do to receive the benefits of the death of Christ? Certainly it cannot be thought that the sinner can add anything to the finished work of Christ. Coming to the mercy-seat is coming to Christ and trusting his finished work upon the cross. It is not a physical exercise. It is a movement of the soul rather than of the body.

Romans 10:6-13, "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

C. D. Cole

my release? By no means. Then can it be expected that God's law that demands absolute righteousness will be more easily satisfied than man's law that is not so rigid? We are not saying that a sinner should be indifferent about his condition--we are not even saying that he should not mourn, but we are saying that his mourning is not the price he pays for salvation. When we see a sinner under conviction and mourning, we should tell him something that will stop his mourning, we are to point him to the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

II. Where is the mercy-seat? Christ is the mercy-seat, but in what capacity? Not in the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Not as a babe in the manger at Bethlehem. Not as the sinless, perfect man as he went about doing good. He said, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," John 12:24. He here declares the necessity of his death if many sons are to be brought to glory. Not the son of man who stilled the storm with the word of his power. He was made perfect as a Saviour through suffering. Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The mercy-seat is Christ in his work upon the cross; Christ in his redemptive work. The mercy-seat is the sin-bearing Christ. Here stands a sinner; what is to be done with him? Reason says, "Let him alone." Justice says, "Cut him down." Truth says, "He or I one must perish." Holiness says, "I hate the workers of iniquity." Mercy pleads,