



# SBAOC Weekly Update

## NEWS & PRAYER REQUESTS

*If you have any news, prayer requests, or events that you would like to have included in this update, please call us at 785-456-8513 or email the information to [spurgeonassociation@gmail.com](mailto:spurgeonassociation@gmail.com).*

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

By Iain H. Murray

The case I want to set out in this chapter is that the either/or of comprehensiveness or isolation was an understandable but wrong presentation of the alternatives. There was another choice open. It is the course to which the New Testament's own definition of Christianity points and the one which has been repeatedly followed at the great turning points of church history. When churches lose their influence, when the Christian message ceases to arrest the indifferent and the unbelieving, when moral decline is obvious in places which once owned biblical standards-when such symptoms as these are evident, then the first need is not to regroup such professing Christianity as remains. It is rather to ask whether the spiritual decline is not due to fundamental failure to understand and practice what Christianity really is.

To think in this way leads very quickly to a subject which has always been unpopular with the world and which is now far from popular in the church.

Is it not offensive and intolerant to suppose that anyone can distinguish true Christians from others? Are there not, it is said, many kinds of followers of Christ and does not love demand that we regard them all as 'fellow Christians'?

This objection often proceeds on the basis of another argument-usually unstated-namely, that the New Testament itself does not give us enough light to be definite. And if Scripture does not resolve the question, 'What is a Christian?' then we must tolerate and justify a breadth of opinion on the subject. But if the New Testament does settle the question then we have no liberty to redefine 'Christian' in terms which neither Christ nor his apostles ever authorized. Evangelicalism has historically been distinguished by its conviction that Scripture speaks plainly on this fundamental issue; it gives us all the light we need to discern between the true and the false, between the nominal and the real.

We turn, then, first to Scripture. There we read one common theme: to become a Christian is to experience the power of Christ in the forgiveness of sin and in the receiving of a new life. It is a change accomplished by God and altogether

*(Continued on page 2)*



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

What is the Gospel?.....	2-4
Comments on our Purpose Statement .....	2
Conferences.....	3
Contact Us .....	5
Pulpit Supply.....	5
Prayer Meetings .....	5

### PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

***"If there is no church... should you not commence one?" C. H. Spurgeon***

## COMMENTS ON OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

*We have come to a place in time where we measure the correctness of our plans simply by their seeming to contribute to our favorite aim. We estimate the soundness of our Doctrine, not from its tendency to exalt and glorify God... but entirely by the apparent facility with which it enables us to get sinners to turn from their ways.*

—Horatius Bonar

(Continued from page 1)

apart from human effort or deserving, for the very faith which is the instrument in uniting the sinner to Christ is itself a gift: 'By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God' (Eph. 2:8). Further, while obedience and love result from the gift of faith, these graces follow rather than contribute anything to our acceptance with God. It is Christ's finished work alone which secures forever the believer's status of righteousness and of 'no condemnation'.

Scripture shows various ways in which an individual gives evidence of having been thus brought 'from death unto life'. The foremost has to do with the content of the faith which is exercised, for true faith rests on knowledge. 'To be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth', is one and the same thing in apostolic Christianity (1 Tim. 2:4). To be 'saved', according to the New Testament, necessarily involves believing a message. Thus Luke sets it down as the first mark of the infant church at Jerusalem that 'they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine' (Acts 2:42); and he tells us that it was through knowledge of the same message about 'the Lord Jesus' that 'the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch' (Acts 11:36). Christianity means knowing and trusting Christ as a living Person; it is a relationship which so captures both the mind and the heart of the believer that henceforth to know Christ, to esteem him and his words, becomes the very object of existence: 'To you who believe he is precious' (1 Pet. 2:7)—more precious certainly than all earthly goods or even life (Luke 14:26). A Christian is someone who no longer lives for himself but understands, with Paul, why Christ is his righteousness, his life, his all.

Opinions already stated in these pages express the possibility of a person not receiving the Christian message, or even being opposed to it, and yet being judged to be a Christian.<sup>1</sup> This is surely contrary to the New Testament. The first and invariable result of the new birth, according to Christ, is 'sight' (John 3:4). By this rebirth an individual comes to belong to the number of whom it is written: 'They shall all be taught by God' (John 6:45). He possesses an enlightenment which sets apart the teaching of God from all the teaching of men; for this person the promise 'You shall know the truth' is a reality (John 8:32).

This is not to say that becoming a Christian is primarily a change of opinion: it is far more profound. The Christian has received a new nature. Included in that nature is a capacity for truth, an affinity with truth, and a love for truth. He has been given 'the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive' (John 14:17), with the result that his understanding of salvation no longer depends upon himself or upon the thinking of other men: 'But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you' (1 John 2:27). 'He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself' (1 John 5:10). What Jesus said to Peter is therefore true of every Christian, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. 16:17). Or, as Paul wrote to believers at Ephesus, 'You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord' (Eph. 5:8).

On the basis of these facts, the New Testament shows that one sure test of a Christian profession is how that person reacts to the Scriptures. Unregenerate men not only do not receive God's Word but they have no moral ability to do so. By nature they are at enmity both against God and against his truth. 'The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are

(Continued on page 3)

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### Encouraged to Endure

**Conference**—July 25-27, 2019.

Second Baptist Church, West Frankfort, IL. Speakers: Joseph Mahlaola, Larry McCall, & John Snyder. Worship Leader: Tom Clay.

### 2019 KNCSB Annual Meeting—

October 14 & 15. Parkview Baptist Church, 803 W. 18th St., Lexington, NE 68850. For more information contact Peg Davis at [pdavis@knscsb.org](mailto:pdavis@knscsb.org).

### Reformation Weekend

**Conference**—October 25-27.

Trinity Baptist Church, Wamego, KS. The SBAOC annual business meeting will be held on Saturday, October 26.

(Continued from page 2)

foolishness to him' (1 Cor. 2:14). So Christ could say to Jewish unbelievers 'Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me ... He who is of God hears God's words: therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God' (John 8:45, 47). On the other hand, a believing acceptance of his words is proof of belonging to his kingdom. All who hear the voice of Christ are members of his flock (John 10:28). So Paul could write to the Christians at Thessalonica: 'For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the word of God' (1 Thess. 2:13).

In distinction from contemporary claims that dogmatism means unchristian intolerance, Scripture thus gives us an antithesis which is sharp and definite. Saving faith requires the power of the Holy Spirit, and his presence or absence in an individual is to be known by the response or the absence of response to his words: 'They are of the world. Therefore speak they as of the world and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error' (1 John 4:5-6).

\* \* \* \*

What happens when these fundamental truths are recovered and proclaimed with power in an age of ignorance and unbelief is not a matter of theory or speculation? The history of the Protestant Reformation, of the sixteenth century is second only to the apostolic age as a demonstration of what may be expected to occur. The lives of the Reformers are examples of men who, no longer content to trust the teaching of the institutional church of their upbringing, went back to Scripture. What was said of Luther might have been said of them all: 'He strengthens himself each day in his convictions by a constant application to the Word of God.'<sup>2</sup> The definition of a Christian which they found there was startlingly new, first to themselves, then to others, and it divided them from Renaissance scholars (such as Erasmus) on the one hand, and from the upholders of the traditional theology of the Church of Rome on the other.

Against the scholars who viewed Christianity largely in terms of a discussion on opinions and morality, and who objected to all claims to certainty, the Reformers asserted the sufficiency and finality of the truth which they had been taught by Christ. They saw the difference between the Renaissance and scriptural Christianity as the difference between natural and supernatural. Thus Luther could respond to Erasmus:

Leave us free to make assertions, and to find in assertions our satisfaction and delight; and you may applaud your Skeptics and Academics-till Christ calls you too! ... The truth is that nobody who has not the Spirit of God sees a jot of what is in the Scriptures. All men have their hearts darkened, so that, even when they can discuss and quote all that is in Scripture, they do not understand or really know any of it.<sup>3</sup>

Philip Melanchthon elaborates on the same point when he states what it means to be a Christian in the Preface to his *Loci* of 1521:

If a man know nothing of the power of sin, of law, or of grace, I do not see how I can call him a Christian. It is there that Christ is truly known. The knowledge of Christ is to know his benefits, taste his salvation, and experience his grace; it

(Continued on page 4)



**THE SPURGEON CENTER**  
for Biblical Preaching at Midwestern Seminary

Making visible the *life, legacy and library* of  
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

[www.spurgeon.org](http://www.spurgeon.org)

5001 North Oak Trafficway  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118

(Continued from page 3)

is not, as the academic people say, to reflect on his natures and the modes of his incarnation. If you do not know the practical purpose for which he took flesh and went to the cross what is the good of knowing his story? He is given us as our remedy, or, in the Bible's phrase, our salvation. And we must know him in another way than the scholars. To know him to purpose is to know the demand of the conscience for holiness, the source of power to meet it, where to seek grace for our sin's failure, how to set up the sinking soul in the face of the world, the flesh, and the devil, how to console the conscience broken. Is that what any of the schools teach? ... How often Paul declared to his believers that he prays for them a rich knowledge of Christ. He foresaw that we should one day leave the saving themes and turn our minds to discussions cold and foreign to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The same principle of the sole authority of Scripture bore equally against Roman Catholicism. For the traditional religion, salvation was an external, objective thing, which the disciple could never know with any personal certainty this side of purgatory. All that could be done was to trust the teaching of the Church and submit to her ceremonies. Against this the Reformers preached that by repentance and faith in Christ there was full and immediate acceptance with God, and that the Holy Spirit himself testifies to the reality of this acceptance in the heart of the believer. United with a risen Saviour, the Christian has the joy of pardon and assurance in present possession.

To the universal objection of Roman Catholicism that the Protestants had fallen into such beliefs through lack of the guidance of the Church (the only true interpreter of Scripture) the evangelicals replied that an understanding of Scripture comes from the Holy Spirit. William Tyndale prized Scripture so highly that he lost his life in giving it to his fellow-countrymen. But he knew that far more than the possession of New Testaments was needed to make men Christians. Nor could any church supply what was necessary. As he told Sir Thomas More, his Roman Catholic opponent:

Though the Scripture be an outward instrument, and the preacher also, to move men to believe, yet the principal cause why a man believeth, or believeth not, is within: that is, the Spirit of God teacheth his children to believe; and the devil blindeth his children, and keepeth them in unbelief, and maketh them consent unto lies, and think good evil, and evil good ... It is impossible to understand either Peter or Paul or aught at all in the scripture, for him that denieth the justifying of faith in Christ's blood.<sup>5</sup>

For the Reformers the Reformation was no mere controversy or doctrinal dispute. The Church of Rome, in her opposition to the way of salvation clearly taught in Scripture, was demonstrating her lack of the Spirit of God. This is not, of

course, to say that the Reformers believed that the teaching of the Holy Spirit makes the thinking of Christians identical in every respect. But the Spirit teaches every Christian what is essential to salvation. The Roman system, by putting faith in the Church, and its sacramental system, in the place of the finished work of Christ, gave sure proof that she was not being taught of God. Her adherents, commonly, did not know the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

On this same theme John Calvin wrote:

They who strive to build up firm faith in Scripture through disputation are doing things backwards ... Since for unbelieving men religion seems to stand by opinion alone, they, in order not to believe anything foolishly or lightly, both wish and demand rational proof that Moses and the prophets spoke divinely. But I reply: the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For God alone is a fit witness to himself in His Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who has spoken through the mouths of the prophets must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully proclaim what has been divinely commanded ... By this power we are drawn and inflamed, knowingly and willingly, to obey him, yet also more vitally and more effectively than by mere human willing or knowing ... I speak of nothing other than what each believer experiences within himself.<sup>6</sup>

Notes:

1 This attitude, it should be said, did not originate in the nineteenth century. At the time of the ejection of the Puritans from the Church of England in 1662 Thomas Case spoke of 'indifference as to matters of faith and doctrine ... We have accounted it no matter of what opinion or judgement men be in these latter times. 'Tis an universal saying, "No matter what judgement men be so they be saints"; as if truth in the judgement did not go to the making up of a saint, as well as holiness in the will and affections ... as if it were no matter, if God have the heart, so the devil be in the head.' Sermon of 17 August 1662 in *Farewell Sermons* (London, 1663).

2 Dietrich to Melancthon, in speaking of Luther at Coburg, during the Diet of Augsburg.

3 Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, eds. J.I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1957), p. 70.

4 Quoted by P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, (London: Independent Press, 1948), p. 220-1.

5 *An Answer to Sir Thomas More* (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1850), p. 139, 169.

6 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 79-80. See also pp. 580-3. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit supplies directly to each individual the evidence necessary to salvation. That evidence is already in Scripture but the Spirit's word is necessary that we should see it.

From the book, *Evangelicalism Divided, a Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000*, published by Banner of Truth.

*Founders Journal*, Fall 2000, [www.FOUNDERS.org](http://wwwFOUNDERS.org)

**SPURGEON  
BAPTIST  
ASSOCIATION  
OF CHURCHES**

**PO Box 155  
Wamego KS 66547**

Phone: (785) 456-8513

Email:  
spurgeonassociation@gmail.com

**Contact Us:**

**Administrative Council:**

**J.W. Glidewell**  
Moderator  
Phone: (785) 772-1176  
jwglidewell@gmail.com

**Tony Mattia**  
Corresponding Secretary  
Trinity Baptist Church  
Wamego, Kansas  
Phone: (785) 456-3796  
spurgeonassociation@gmail.com

**Ken Jorgenson, At Large**  
kjorg@hotmail.com

**Robin Jackson, At Large**  
jacksonrobin@gmail.com

**Bill Ascol, At Large**  
bascol@sbcglobal.net

**Paul Walker, At Large**  
pastorpaul@elmavenuebaptist.org

**Lyn Hansen, At Large**  
pastorlyn@insidenp.com



[WWW.SBAOC.ORG](http://WWW.SBAOC.ORG)

## MEN AVAILABLE FOR PULPIT SUPPLY

Kevin Berens  
Colby, Kansas  
Email: berens.kevin@gmail.com  
Cell Phone: 785-332-7184

Nathaniel Penland  
Lawrenceville, Georgia  
Email: n8penland@gmail.com  
Phone: 678-925-7024

Tim Lambert  
Lindsborg, Kansas  
Email: tlambert@smokyvalley.org  
Phone: 785-614-3651

Bake Ottofy  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Email: bakeottofy@gmail.com  
Phone: 636-467-7446

Brad Richardson  
Lawrence, Kansas  
Email: richbud@hotmail.com  
Phone: 785-766-7268

John Grove  
Ocala, FL  
Email: trsjwg@gmail.com  
Phone: 352-286-5494

## PRAYER MEETINGS FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND REVIVAL

- Fellowship Baptist Church in Onaga, Kansas—5:00 pm on Sundays
- Trinity Baptist Church in Wamego, Kansas—8:00 pm on Saturdays

*The Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches is an association of Southern Baptist Churches that are united to manifest the glory of God above all. We set out to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. As an association of churches we are bound in mutual covenant to strengthen and support one another - motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture - by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.*

*We are a non-geographic association seeking to include any like-minded body of believers so that together we might better fulfill the great commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our intent is to lean on His instruction and not our imaginations so that He is honored in all that we do. We welcome churches who adhere to the confessions of faith accepted by Southern Baptists throughout their history, including, but not limited to, the Second London Confession (1689) and the Baptist Faith and Message.*



Baptist Association of Churches