

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

VOLUME NUMBER 3

DECEMBER 16, 2018

ISSUE NUMBER 4

RICH IN GOOD WORKS

by H. B. Little

Baptist history is hardly fraught with tales of worldly wealth and prosperity. In nearly all ages, Baptists have entered into the kingdom of God with much trouble and great suffering. In the darkest times, our forefathers were forced into uninhabited lands, being driven there by persecution. Leaving behind worldly possessions, they dwelt as paupers in mountains, in dens, and in caves of the earth. They embodied the words of the Apostle James, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?” James 2:5. During such times of persecution, few rich men entered the kingdom of God, and fewer kept their worldly wealth in doing so.

For the last two hundred and fifty years, the circumstances of the Baptists have changed. By providence, we have found sanctuary in the religious liberty of Western civilization. Our people are no longer required to choose between exile and our faith. With this newfound freedom, the Baptists have prospered. While a great number of spiritual blessings have arisen with religious freedom, we have also experienced an increase in temporal blessings, namely wealth.

With an increase of wealth among the Baptists, we have a greater responsibility to be good stewards of that wealth. Writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul assigns duty to the well-off believer:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 2 Timothy 6:17-19.

The apostle begins his exhortation by warning us of two particular temptations associated with many possessions: arrogance and misplaced trust. The Apostle John describes the prideful

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THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

by M. A. Brawner

It is impossible to include all of the relevant references which touch on the subject of this article. The following are provided as a simple sketch of this powerful truth. Let's begin by considering the doctrine which the Lord presented during His personal ministry here on the earth. In the following we find Him to state, "... My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me", John 7:16. It goes without fear of contradiction to state that the Lord taught and demonstrated the doctrine of grace to the uttermost when He gave His own self as the only ransom on behalf of all of mankind, Matthew 20:28. In His sacrificial offering, we are taught clearly that grace is made available to all of us because of His gracious surrender to the will of God the Father, John 1:16. The doctrine He demonstrated before all of mankind was not His own. It was the doctrine of the One who sent Him, and it was the doctrine of grace.

Grace versus Works: The fallen nature within mankind seems to constantly assert that somehow we are able to do something or trade something in order to make us good by our own merit. This is especially true when we conclude we can do a religious work or have someone else perform a religious work on us in order to meet the requirements of righteousness. No matter which way we turn it, all of the efforts of man turn out to be works. The Word of God makes it plain that works and grace are polar opposites of each other. This is so clearly taught in the following verses that a child can understand it: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work", Romans 11:5-6. As is clearly stated, God elected grace and this grace is free of all works of every sort.

Salvation by Grace: The Bible teaches the doctrine of grace when it explains how a person must receive soul salvation.

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PEACE ON EARTH

by T. S. Austin

A popular song around the Christmas holiday is "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Since the beginning of creation, mankind has striven to obtain "Peace on Earth" with fellow man. Fostering peace domestically and abroad seems to be the goal of every US politician and humanitarian. However, is "Peace on Earth" attainable or even possible?

The world has been confused from the very beginning on the purpose of Jesus's life on Earth. His chosen people expected him to be a nationalistic Savior that would bring peace and prosperity to their everyday lives on this present Earth. However, simply giving us an earthly, temporal peace to make our current lives more bearable was never the intent or purpose of our Lord and Savior's earthly existence. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. Jesus came to redeem us to a perfect and just God while giving hope in an eternity to come for those that believe on His name. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13.

One of the most fundamental tenets of the Bible that most of the secular world (and sadly, a large part of today's religious world) rejects is the fact that there is an evil agent constantly at work on the Earth today. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. Should we fool ourselves into thinking that Satan would be flippant about "world peace" when his attacks on our personal lives and personal peace are so apparent? So interested is Satan in creating havoc and friction in our daily lives that we are warned that our most sacred human relationship – the marriage relationship – cannot thrive without constant attentiveness and devotion to resist his temptations. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may

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PEACE ON EARTH

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give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." 1 Corinthians 7:5.

As Christians we are called to always strive for peace with those around us. We are called to settle conflicts with our brethren and seek resolutions to our differences without letting them fester into grudges that grow unchecked. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you..." Ephesians 4:31. Without Christians seeking to promote peace at every opportunity, the world would truly be unbearable to live in. Conversely, agents of evil are constantly looking to sow discord, strife, anger, rage, and hate at every turn, looking to undo and vilify any good that Christians endeavor to pursue. As disheartening and unbelievable as this may seem to us who seek to do good in the world, we are not to be surprised by this. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." 1 John 3:13. Our country and world continue to grow more and more divided socially, politically, and in every other way imaginable. Evil has captivated the world so that everything has been turned upside down from what it once was: good is now evil, evil is now good; truth is now a lie, a lie is now the truth. It seems more and more that the most respected and popular people in today's society are those "who changed the truth of God into a lie..." Romans 1:25.

The only "Peace on Earth" promised to us is the peace that can only be experienced in the heart of a born-again child of God. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Isaiah 32:17. The Bible teaches that the greatest work of righteousness known to man is when a lost individual believes in Jesus's work of reconciliation at the Cross and by grace through faith obtains eternal salvation. The very instant the individual passes from nature to grace, an indescribable peace consumes what was previously a troubled and sin-sick soul. Thus, the most immediate and universal realization for every person that has ever been saved is the immediate work by the Spirit of God to give the individual peace. This verse then points to the continual and ongoing effects of that initial bestowing of eternal peace. The first effect

is quietness. One of the tools Satan uses to create chaos and discord in our lives is to keep us distracted and unfocused from serving God. Our lives have become so busy and "noisy" that we fail to spend sufficient time with God in prayer, meditation, and study of the Word. One of the greatest benefits of the ever-present peace that a saved person has access to is the ability to shut the world out and find alone time with God. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:6. This reference to a prayer closet is not a physical room that an individual must hide themselves in, but a sacred state of spiritual focus where the individual is alone with God. The second effect of the initial gift of eternal peace is assurance. God never wants an individual to doubt their eternal security. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13. With turmoil surrounding our daily lives, peace with God in our hearts is further assurance that we have been redeemed and will obtain the victory at the end of this life.

SINGING IN OUR CHURCHES

by D. S. Patterson

The most visible person in our church services is the preacher. When he stands to preach the gospel, everyone in attendance is watching. The second most visible person is the song leader. He has the responsibility of the service when he is standing before the congregation. Just as the preacher, the song leader is a visible connection for the singing part of our services. He must demand not only the attention of the congregation, but he must also demand the congregation follow him during that part of the service. To do this the song leader must have at least a basic knowledge of music. Am I saying that the song leader must have a music degree? No, not by any means. However, he can study music enough to be an effective song leader.

In preparation for the song service, the song leader must take the time to look through the songbook to get a feeling as to what songs need to be used. Yes, I said a feeling. Many times I have felt a certain song was to be used, and the preacher commented that the song was on the same

subject matter as his sermon. My point is this: we should always allow the Spirit of God to direct in the selection of songs. I was leading the singing during a revival several years ago, and one of the preachers and I were talking. We were very good friends, and as friends sometimes do, we picked at one another. He told me one night that my job was easier than his. I asked, "How?" He said my songs were written down. I then asked him was not his scripture written down. He replied that he had to find the right one. I answered, "So do I."

Finding the right songs is only part of the job. The song leader must also pick songs that are scriptural. Sometimes the songs, even in the books we use, are not scriptural. The song leader must be very careful and not pick a song just because he knows it. One example that comes to mind is the song "I'll Live On." This old song has been around so long that the copyright date is no longer used. In the chorus of the song, the text reads "I'll live on, yes I'll live on, thru eternity I'll live on." Eternity has no end, so one cannot go thru it. This may seem picky to some, but not to me. When I lead the song I change some of the word accordingly, such as saying the word "in" in the place of the word "thru."

The song leader must take command of the service in the beginning. When a song is announced, I speak it loud enough for all in the house to hear. Should the song have four or more verses, I tell everyone up front which verses will be sung, even if it will be all of them. Also, I tell up front if there is anything within the music that needs to be observed such as prolongs or the coda. When the pianist plays the introduction, I set the speed of the song. Often, the pianist sets the speed of the song, but this is the song leader's job. It is no reflection upon the pianist should the song leader say "we need to slow the song down", or "we need to speed the song up." Again, he is doing his job as the song leader. When starting each verse of the song, I say "on the first, sing" or something on this order so that the congregation and the pianist will know when to start each verse. Also, I stand where the pianist can see me while I am directing. Directing the singing with hand motions is not required to be an effective song leader, but it is easily learned and can be a very effective tool to show the congregation that the song leader knows what he is doing.

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THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

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In Ephesians 2:8-9, we find it written, "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". Soul salvation comes by grace which is accessed through faith. This shows that soul salvation is an unearned favor which came by the Lord giving Himself on our behalf. All who have received this precious gift of God will never be able to thank Him enough for giving His own Son in order make this gift available to us by grace.

Enabled by Grace: The doctrine of grace directly applies to the lives of the children of God. Once a person is born again, their new life extends before them running out to the eternal land of the living. All of those who are truly born again will still face the struggles of bringing their outward man, with its fallen nature, into subjection to the will of God. Some constantly fail at trying to do this, because for some reason, they believe they are somehow able to muster the personal strength to carry this out. The Word of God lays out in many places that there is only one way for a child of God to live the Christian life and that is by receiving strength daily that comes from the Lord. In Philippians 4:13, we find this confirmed when we read, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." There is strength in the Lord which can be found no where else; not even in our own selves. We should start all of our days applying for this strength at the throne of grace where we can "obtain mercy" and "find grace" to help us along life's way, Hebrews 4:16. This will be a life where the child of God is depending on the grace of God daily to enable them to travel to that land God has prepared for them.

Preserved by Grace: The doctrine of grace also relates to the promise of God to preserve His people who serve Him in the truth. We find this promise in Matthew 16:18: "... upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". I believe this verse of scripture teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ set up His very own Church during His earthly ministry. More than this, I believe He declared that not even the very gates of hell would be able to end the existence of His Church. When this verse is combined with Matthew 28:20, it becomes obvious how the Lord would ensure the continued presence of His

Church in the world. He stated, "... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen", Matthew 28:20. The Lord said the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church knowing that He would accompany it "even unto the end of the world". This indicates that the Lord, by His grace, would preserve His Church. In the writing found in 1 Peter 5:12, we learn that the Church indeed enjoys this grace when we read, "... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." Those who have been born again and who have also stepped out and united to the Lord's Church are part of the body being preserved to this very day in "the true grace of God".

The doctrine of grace is the doctrine of God. It has been taught from the very beginning. Man has received of its benefits all down through time. We will continue to receive of it in eternity. May God help us to have our eyes opened to it and have a great desire to see others be partakers of it.

SINGING IN OUR CHURCHES

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During the altar service the song leader once again must be prominent with the singing. His voice must stand out above the crowd. The song numbers must be announced loud enough for all to hear. The selection of songs during the altar service is very important. First of all, the songs must be known to the crowd, so they can be free to shake hands and talk to sinners on the altar or in the house. If the crowd has to walk around constantly looking at the songbook to keep their place, it takes away from the service. Secondly, the song must be appropriate for this part of the service. I had a preacher friend tell me one time that he was in a revival with a church and had preached on hell. He said he had tried to preach it as hot as he could. When the song leader announced the invitation song, it was "The Prettiest Flowers Will Be Blooming." Not knowing the song leader, my only comment could have been that he picked out the first song that he knew or he did not listen to the sermon.

I have heard this story many times over the years concerning a well known preacher from days gone by. During a time when there was a shortage of pastors, this preacher was the pastor of five churches. When there were only four Sundays in a month, this preacher would have a service with one church in the morning and

another service with a second church in the afternoon. On one such occasion, a man attended both the morning and afternoon services. After the afternoon service, the man asked the preacher if he preached the same sermon that morning at the first church. Without answering concerning his preaching, the pastor said, "Did they not sing the same songs?"

It takes years to learn all there is to know about being a good, effective song leader. Attending a singing school will help him along in the right direction. We do not need to get into the rut of singing the same songs over and over again, because this is all we know. Should the church elect a pastor that preached the same sermon over and over again, how long would this pastor last? We expect our pastors to study and preach the gospel with the help of the Lord. Should not we song leaders at least apply ourselves to study music to aid us in the work given to us? We are all His servants. Also, He said He would not put anything on us that we cannot bear. How many times have we heard our pastor say "I was bashful and could not stand before a crowd, much less read before a crowd." Now with experience they are wonderful preachers that preach the gospel with power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. How is this done? They surrender to the Lord, and He helps them to study and to stand. As song leaders, we can do the same.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Macon/Sumner County Singing School will be held at Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church, 1000 Dobbins Pike, Gallatin, TN, on March 4th through 8th from 6 pm to 8 pm each night with closing singing on Saturday March 9th at 2 pm. All levels of instruction will be available. A \$25 tuition will be charged for all instruction, a new convention songbook, a new music rudiment book, and binder with all supplies for the school. Registration will be at 5 pm on March 4th. For info call Danny Patterson at (615) 666-3438.

CORRESPONDENCE

Any congregation or individual wishing to receive copies of this publication may obtain them upon request at no cost. Please address all communications by mail to:

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RICH IN GOOD WORKS

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thoughts of a wealthy world which has succumb to these. In Revelation 18:7, he describes people who live in luxury, honor themselves, and say proudly in their hearts, "I...shall see no sorrow." Let us remember the wise words of King Solomon, who writes, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Proverbs 23:5. While riches are uncertain and can fly away, our Lord is a sure foundation. If we trust in Him, we shall not be ashamed.

The apostle continues his directive by calling for the well-off Christian to be rich in good works. In other words, our good deeds ought to be as abundant as our worldly possessions. Paul writes, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10. We live in a wealthy nation and have much "opportunity" to do good by giving cheerfully of our plenteous possessions. When occasion arises, we should be "ready" and "willing" to share these with the less fortunate.

One way a Christian can fulfill the apostle's command is by donating to charitable organizations. There are several well-stewarded non-profits who pass on the bulk of their contributions to the needy. While we ought to seek these out and support them as we feel our need to do so, we ought not forget that a local Baptist Church can and should directly help the needy. The New Testament is full of examples of local churches feeding the hungry, supporting the feeble, and helping those devastated by disaster.

The Jerusalem Church is an example worthy of consideration. They were rich in good works toward the impoverished. They were ready and willing to serve the temporal needs of their community. After the early revivals in Jerusalem, affluent members of the church, like Barnabas, sold their possessions to support the church work. The money held by the church was used for "the daily ministrations", or the daily relief of the poor. Acts 6:1. In other words, the church was continually helping the needy. They considered this work so important that they ordained the first group of deacons to "serve tables." Acts 6:2.

The Jerusalem Church was not alone in serving the disadvantaged. On one occasion, they became recipients of the benevolence of the Antioch Church. Luke writes:

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:27-30

Here is another example of a local church being rich in good works toward the needy. Upon hearing of the impending Judean famine, Antioch Church, in Syria, took collection among themselves and delivered their contributions by church messengers, namely Barnabas and Paul. The Jerusalem Church received these goods and distributed them for the relief of their devastated community.

The New Testament also contains examples of local churches working together to support worthy causes. Among these is the joint contribution of the churches of "Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." Romans 15:26. The Apostle Paul received this contribution from individual churches and delivered it to the poor, persecuted Christians at Jerusalem. For this cause, he made his fateful, final trip to Jerusalem. After being arrested there, Paul testified to Felix the reason for his return. "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation." Acts 24:17.

The benevolent acts of the New Testament churches are written for our instruction. When we see the need, when we have opportunity, and when the Spirit directs us to do so, let us be rich in good works. Let us "contribute cheerfully and regularly to...the relief of the poor" as stated in J. N. Brown's *Church Covenant*. When appropriate, let us do this as a church, doing "all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:17. When a greater need calls for it, let us seek like minded churches and cooperate with each other for the support of the poor and the furtherance of the gospel.

Charitable cooperation in our Baptist Associations has done great good. These Associations not only supported gospel missions, but they also collected funds for the relief of the needy in their communities. It has been only thirty years since the Enon Association, of Middle Tennessee, received donations from local churches for the operation of the Baptist Orphans' Home in Lafayette, Tennessee. Only eternity will reveal the great good done by the cooperation of churches for this worthy work.

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hebrews 13:16.

BOOKS FOR SALE

The Baptist Landmark still has several copies of the books offered in the last issue. The following volumes are offered at our cost.

Trail of Blood, by J. M. Carroll. This book contains a brief history of the Baptists. It contains large print and a nice chart mapping our lineage from the New Testament age. Format: Paperback. Length: 60 pages. Price: \$3 + shipping

Baptist Succession, by D. B. Ray. This book sets the record straight on the 1641 Discovery, the Roger Williams Church, the matter of John Smith, and others. It also introduces the reader to the Waldenses and other ancient Baptists. Format: Hardback. Length: 396 Pages. Price: \$10 + \$3 shipping

History of the Welsh Baptists, by J. Davis. This book contains the history of the Baptists in Wales from the year 63 to 1778. Interestingly, some of the oldest churches in the South have traced their origins to a church which migrated from Wales. Format: Hardback. Length: 204 pages. Price: \$5 + \$3 shipping

Orders can be taken by mail or email.

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This issue concludes the third volume of The Baptist Landmark. The Lord has richly blessed this work and the efforts made this year. We want to thank our writers and those who work behind the scenes for their efforts. We also want to thank everyone who has supported and prayed for this work. May God richly bless you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Britt Little