

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

VOLUME NUMBER 5

JUNE 21, 2020

ISSUE NUMBER 2

FORGOTTEN BAPTIST HERITAGE

by M. A. Brawner

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. Mal 3:16-18

In these verses, God lets us know that He keeps track of the people who fear Him and serve Him in the truth. Such a people are those who have served the Lord in an unbroken succession as members of the Church His Son established here in the Earth during His personal ministry. Those who are blessed to be a part of one of His Churches today have the privilege of entering the labors of those who have gone on before. Too often we hear of brethren who feel wiser than Solomon who suggest we should depart from the decisions made by our forefathers. We are told to undo the heritage left us to preserve. Are the Lord's people today perishing for the lack of the knowledge of their heritage? Have they gained knowledge written by the Lord's adversaries and, believing these half truths, departed from the heritage entrusted to them? Let us explore some of these issues and ask God to help us see their importance.

The late Brother D. B. Ray developed a hand-book that was reprinted 27 times. The Church History Research and Archives was started by brethren who were members of the old time Missionary Baptists in Macon County, TN. They reprinted the last edition of this book and made its contents available to our generation. Brother Ray was a gifted historian of the true Baptist faith. In the preface of this book, he pointed out the need for the people of God to learn their

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THY WORD IS TRUTH

by H. B. Little

As our Lord prepared for His crucifixion, He prayed for His church saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17. From this prayer, we can learn two important lessons. First, the will of God for His people is our sanctification. He wants us to be consecrated to His service and separated from the world by our godly deportment. Second, we learn how we are sanctified: our belief of the truth, which is the word of God. When we know what God has said in His holy scriptures and we believe them, we will prayerfully live out the tenets found in them.

If we do not believe God's word, we will not obey it. This principle is as old as the human family. When God placed Adam and Eve in Eden, He told them not to eat from the forbidden tree saying, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen 2:17. And they were kept by this word until they believed the lie of the adversary: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen 3:4-5. Just as the serpent did in Adam's day, he disputes the truth of God's word today.

The devil has convinced many that the Bible is not true. And often the Bible believing Christian is called ignorant or uneducated. Faced with such criticism, some Christians have compromised their views on the nature of the scriptures. Maybe you have heard good-hearted Christians promote this misguided view. It usually takes this form. "The Bible is not meant to be taken literally. It is spiritual in nature. It is not a historical or scientific textbook." Sometimes this view takes this more subtle form. "The Bible was true when written, but that was millennia ago. It now contains many errors through centuries of copying."

Let's consider each of these arguments and address them. First, are all Bible believing Christians ignorant or uneducated? No. Bible believing Baptists

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STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED

by Greg Dunham

Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Isaiah 5:13

The prophet Isaiah speaks here of a lamentable situation with the people of God. Earlier in this same fifth chapter he describes the relationship between God and His people by an allegory of a vineyard. By careful examination we can see that by the hand of God all things necessary for the prosperity of the vineyard had been accomplished, yet it did not bring forth as expected. God then describes, by the pen of Isaiah, the destruction and ruin that will come on His people as He removes the hedges and breaks down the walls. He then goes on to describe a people who are termed as drunkards. While this can certainly be applied to alcoholic consumption, it also can be applied to excess of anything that is displeasing to God. The people were drunk on worldliness. The reason therefore for their captivity becomes clear. They did not possess a sufficient knowledge of the desires of God. God looked for them to bring forth grapes. He carefully provided for them all things that were necessary, and yet they did not understand their purpose.

We live in a day that it appears that we, as the Church of the living God, are at a point of destitution. We see few, if any, converts. Of the few that do come to a knowledge of salvation, many choose not to unite with the Lord's Church, and of those that do join, very few really take hold. We are seeing declines in attendance. Churches are going longer and longer without pastors. Fewer men are being called into the ministry, and fewer still can meet the qualifications of a bishop. Churches in many cases are doing without an active deacon because they have no one that is qualified to serve. It's as if God has let down the hedges around us and torn down our fences. Without these protections,

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STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED

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we are being eaten up and trodden down. If these things are so, perhaps we should try to determine why.

The unchanging nature of God leads us to understand that as He dealt with Israel, He can deal with us. Therefore we should be searching diligently to determine why we seem to have no power with God. I would propose that it is worthy of consideration to look at these scriptures in Isaiah and find a correlation between Israel and us. When God brought it down to the nuts and bolts with Israel, it was their lack of understanding what was expected of them that caused this captivity to come upon them. All that was necessary for them to be able to serve God acceptably was set in place. No truer words could be spoken concerning our situation. God declares that His word is the perfect guide for us. Yet time and again, we find brethren that are diametrically opposed to one another, each claiming "their doctrine" to be correct. When such is the case be assured that one, the other, or both are wrong. God's word is true, and nothing could be clearer.

How then can we finally determine what is correct? Paul admonished Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Notice that the admonition was not to study to prove your thought but to be approved by God. Our notions, ideas and opinions have led us into a decidedly precarious situation. So first we need to understand what God says. This will be accomplished by prayerful consideration of the Word of God. We also need to realize that just because something pops into our mind, it does not necessarily follow that it is correct. 1 John 4:1 says "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The adversary will attempt to bring every heresy into your thoughts and will then convince you that thought is correct. Peter helps us out in 2nd Peter 1:20, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." A correct understanding of the scriptures will only be found when the scriptures interpret the scriptures.

Returning to Paul's instruction to Timothy, the young preacher was admonished to study. It is incumbent on a minister of the

gospel to prepare himself to the work God has called him into. Preachers are not to be parrots. Too many a young preacher simply repeats the thoughts and words and phrases that his pastor, or some other favorite minister says, and believes that to be preaching. Preaching is more. A man should study God's word until He understands it himself and can defend his position based on a proper interpretation of the Word and with additional proofs. Then, and only then, as the Spirit gives direction he should declare that portion of scripture and apply it to our lives. Saying popular phrases may make you popular, but God's truth is not always popular.

There is also a component that the churches have in this. First, they should nurture faithful ministers among us by encouragement and wise counsel. Second, the churches are to try the ministers that come among them. Revelations 2:2 says "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." Notice that the Church was commended for trying, or judging, false apostles. This is still necessary today. 2nd Peter 2:1 says "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." While we are quick to apply this to "modern churches" and "modern preachers", a correct interpretation will find that the false teachers will be among you, which is the Lord's Church.

I would encourage all who might read this to start putting forth an honest effort in learning the Word of God. Some would say, "I can't understand Revelations or Daniel or all that Old Testament stuff." Then start with the Gospels. The overwhelming majority of the truth is contained in them. Follow up with references from the New Testament Epistles, and then some Old Testament "stories". You won't get it all in one sitting anyway, but you can get something out of each honest attempt. This is the way of learning according to the Bible itself. Isaiah 28:10 says "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." The little you may learn,

with your honest attempt, may be the difference between the hedges staying or being torn down.

THE REVIVAL OF 1854

In January of 1855, Brother Smithwick (1820-1881), of Tompkinsville, Kentucky, wrote to *The Tennessee Baptist* with a good report of a great revival occurring the previous fall. I have provided a portion of it below.

Brother Graves: We take up our pen to give a synopsis of a series of meetings which have been held in this section during the month of October.

At Dixon's Creek (Jonathan Wiseman pastor), embracing the second Sabbath, a very interesting meeting was held, which resulted in the conversion of eleven persons...

On Friday before the third Sabbath, the writer commenced a meeting of days with Defeated Creek Church... The meeting resulted in forty-nine conversions, and forty were baptized during the meeting...

On Sabbath evening, the 4th, we left for Union Church, Macon County, Tennessee...Twenty-two conversions and twenty-two accessions were the glorious fruits of the meeting.

Father D. Smith commenced a meeting at Mt. Tabor, embracing the 5th Sabbath...The Lord graciously revived His cause. Thirteen brilliant conversion were the fruits of the meeting... "We are laborers together with Him." Let us sum up the results:

<i>Dixon's Creek</i>	11
<i>Defeated Creek</i>	49
<i>Union</i>	22
<i>Mt. Tabor</i>	13
<i>Total</i>	95

Bro. Graves, this is no small month's work when we consider the bounds in which it was performed. For eight miles from either church would reach the common center of the whole. But we close by giving God all the glory.

S. A. Smithwick

I am quite familiar with the churches mentioned in this report, as I presently pastor Union Church. The eight mile radius mentioned above is a quite rural setting—even today. Ninety-five conversions among these churches must have been a wonderful sight to behold. My prayer to God is that we might see such revivals in days to come.

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history being aware that much history in the world was written by the adversaries of the truth. It should be noted that at the time of his writing, when referring to the "Church of Christ", he was referring to the Baptist Church because Christ started the Baptist Church. At one time, many of our Churches were called by names such as the "Rocky Mound United Baptist Church of Christ." Later, due to false teachings and practices relating to the purpose of baptism and scriptural mission work, Churches changed their names resulting in "Rocky Mound Missionary Baptist Church". Of course, the "Church of Christ" was dropped when the followers of Alexander Campbell took root in our part of the country. Consider what Bro. Ray shared.

It has ever been the policy of Rome to destroy, as far as possible, not only the true church itself, but every vestige of its history. This fell design has led Romish authors to make the effort to blacken the character of the Church of Christ, by accusing its members of almost every crime which Satanic malice could invent. And they have so far succeeded in their purpose, as to make the impression on the multitude, that there is no church succession independent of Rome, and that all other churches came out of the Catholic Church!

Brother Ray also makes it plain that the daughters of Rome fall into this same category. The direct descendants of the Catholic Church include: Lutherans, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, Nazarenes and all of the holiness groups which spawned out of them. They work extra long hours trying to convince Baptist people that the teachings of Fundamentalism and joint evangelical efforts are more important than heritage. Let it also be noted that when Baptists entangle themselves with the teachings and practices of Protestant groups, they become "Baptist In Name Only". What a people believe and practice defines what they are more than what is on the sign outside. So, a Baptist writing a history book, entangled in Protestantism, fails to make that a Baptist History book.

While urging the need to understand our Baptist Heritage, Ray goes on in the preface of his book. He states:

I can see no reason why any child of God should be indifferent as to the

history of the "martyrs of Jesus," upon whose blood the Romish harlot was drunk for so many ages. I know that the full details of the cruel sufferings of these witnesses for Christ is preserved alone in the archives of heaven, and will there be preserved till that glorious day when every hidden thing shall be brought to light...But, how few are interested in the history of those men and women of whom the world is not worthy, who forsook all for the kingdom of God, and became pilgrims and strangers on the earth. They were often clad in sheep-skins and goat-skins, and wandered in deserts and mountains; they sometimes lived in caves and dens of the earth, or dragged out their wretched lives in filthy prison-dungeons; and, at last, thousands of them sealed their testimony at the stake, where they sang and shouted the praises of God, amidst the flames which devoured their bodies. Is it possible that God's children, who are more highly favored, feel no interest in the investigation of the history of the Bride of Jesus Christ, whose wanderings in the wilderness may be traced by her martyr blood, as seen in the gloomy light of the martyr fires?

Let us be found in that number who serve God in such a way as to know how we as a people arrived in this present day and labor to learn what heritage we have been entrusted to preserve.

In an effort share some of this precious heritage, the following has been gathered from multiple documents available for all to consider. Please read this and think about the way the Lord has used His people in the shaping of our United States of America.

Who has read of John Gano? He was pastor of the Baptist Church in New York City when the Revolutionary War broke out. He became the personal chaplain of George Washington during the war and ministered to him. Washington was an Episcopalian. His pastor came out on the side of the British at the outbreak of the war. According to the book *Evidences of General Washington's Baptism*, by L.C. Barnes, Gano baptized Washington into the Baptist Church. The service which Gano rendered during the war and the courage he demonstrated while battle raged caused Washington to declare that "Baptist Chaplains were the most prominent and useful in the army." See William Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*,

Volume 1, page 434. When men of Protestant faiths are writing history books, is it any wonder such facts as this precious Baptist Heritage are left out?

Who has read of the Sandy Creek Revival? Sandy Creek, located in rural North Carolina, was the scene of one of the most powerful revivals in the history of the world. Authors write and widely publicize the efforts of men like Johnathon Edwards, George Whitefield, and Charles Finney. All of these men were either Anglicans or Presbyterians. Baptists are left to believe that any significant work accomplished in the religious history of America must have been accomplished by those outside of the Lord's Baptist people. Yet, this is far from the case. Shubal Stearns was far more effective in the work the Lord assigned him than any of these before mentioned men.

Brother Stearns was saved under the preaching of George Whitfield and soon entered the ministry of the Congregational Church as what was then called, a New Light Separatist. Shortly thereafter, he encountered and studied the teachings of the Baptists as they are in Christ Jesus. Soon, he joined the Baptists and was baptized by Bro Wait Palmer of Connecticut. Bro Stearns was ordained before he and a small group migrated south to a work which he felt the Lord was calling him to do. In a matter of time, he and fifteen others were organized into a Church on the Sandy Creek in North Carolina. Within a few years time, this Church of sixteen grew to a body of 606. Within seventeen years it had become the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother of 42 Churches and had witnessed the Lord call 125 men into the ministry. The location of these Churches spanned into Georgia to the south, eastward to the ocean, northward to the Potomac, and west as far as the Mississippi. This proud heritage belongs to Baptists alone because the work was conducted as a separate people, everywhere despised by their adversaries.

These examples literally only scratch the surface of this important topic. If any would like more direct information, feel free to reach out to any of the writers of this newsletter. We are more than willing to point you in the direction of trustworthy materials. Let's join in prayer that God would open the eyes of His Church people to the need to understand the heritage which seems to be so extensively forgotten.

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founded many first rate American universities. A few notable ones are Baylor, Brown, Furman, Mercer, Samford, and Wake Forest. Also, many of our well educated Baptists forefathers believed in the inerrancy of scripture. John Gill, James P. Boyce, and John Broadus were first rate scholars and believed the Bible to be without any mixture of error.

If we had not one university or scholar to our credit, and if we must wear the title of fool for believing the Bible, let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul. A highly educated man himself, he wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 1 Co 1:18-19. We should not be surprised if the world rejects the word of God as foolishness. We should be mindful that the same word is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Co 1:23-24.

Second, should we consider the Bible to be a spiritual text with historical or scientific inaccuracies? Or can we trust scriptural accounts, such as the origin of man and the worldwide flood, as true historical event? We can trust them. Let's consider the words of our Savior on the historical authority of scripture. When asked about marriage and Mosaic toleration of divorce, the Lord Jesus used the creation account written by Moses as a historical record. He said, "Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" Mat 19:4-5. He understood that Adam and Eve were the first couple, created and married by God Himself. And He used this fact to advocate lifelong marriage.

When the Lord was asked about the end of time, He used the worldwide flood as an illustration of the sudden and unexpected nature of the coming destruction. He said, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26-27. He clearly understood the worldwide

flood to be a historical event and used it to warn of a sure and sudden destruction at His second coming.

The Son of God not only used the examples of the creation and the worldwide flood as the basis for His doctrine, but also the martyrdom of Abel, the belief of the gospel by Abraham, the destruction of Sodom, and the account of Jonah. If Christ our Lord believed and taught these accounts to be factual history, we are not better than our Master. We should believe and promote them as true also.

Third, should we consider the Bible to still be accurate millennia after its inspiration? Has God preserved for us a precise account of His holy book? Yes. Let's consider an example found in Paul's interpretation of the promises made to the Seed of Abraham. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal 3:16. Paul wrote the Galatian Letter about the year 58 A.D. He spoke of promises made to Abraham who died about the year 1792 B.C. And Paul quotes the Book of Genesis written by Moses who died about the year 1423 B.C. Yet he so trusted the text that he hangs his whole argument on the number of a single noun—seed. He says "not...of many, but as of one". Paul clearly trusted this scripture to be the precise word of God, despite the passage being written by Moses 400 years after the event occurred and despite it being copied by scribes for nearly 1,500 years after being written. We too should trust that scripture is written by inspired men of God and preserved by His divine providence.

Our Lord Jesus prayed to our Father, "Thy word is truth." The word of God is not merely a book containing fables which convey true principles. It is true in every way. It was divinely inspired and has been divinely preserved through the ages. In the words of J. N. Brown, "the Holy Bible...is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction...truth without any mixture of error, for its matter...[it] is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried." *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith, Article I*. Seeing we have such a treasure in the Holy Bible, let us apply ourselves to understand it and live out its principles daily.

PENDLETON ON THE ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE

Dr. J. M. Pendleton (1811-1891) was a Baptist pastor, author and professor. He authored many good books such as "An Old Landmark Reset", "Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist", and "Distinctive Baptist Doctrines." His most popular work is his "Church Manual." He also wrote a lesser known book of theology called "Christian Doctrines." In this work, he devoted an entire chapter to the nature of the scriptures, which he titled *The Bible a Revelation From God*.

Over a century has passed since Bro. Pendleton went to be with our Lord. However, his comments on the machinations to discredit the Bible, and the holy book's triumph over them, are just as on point as if he had written them today. He writes:

Greater efforts have been made to destroy the Bible than were ever put forth for the destruction of any other book. Its foes have persistently attempted to arrest its influence. Criticism has assailed it and ridicule has derided it. Science and philosophy have been invoked to discredit it. Astronomy in the disclosure of its heavenly wonders has been asked for some fact to disparage it, and geology in its researches in the earth has been importuned to throw suspicion on it.

The Bible, however, yet has a place in the world. There are more copies of it in circulation to-day than ever before. Written originally in Hebrew and Greek, it has been translated into hundreds of languages, so that poetry breathes historical truth in the words,

*Dialects unheard at Babel or Jewish Pentecost
Now first articulate divinest sounds,
And swell the universal anthem.*

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