

# THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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## REMNANT BY GRACE

by M. A. Brawner

*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom 11:1-5*

If we would go back and read about this period of the history of Israel, we would find that a false religion had been adopted. Jezebel was married to King Ahab. She introduced her beliefs into Israel and enforced those beliefs with the sword. It is noted in this history that she had killed the Lord's people who failed to yield to her religion. The extent of this bloody policy left Elijah in such a state of mind that we find him offering the prayer found in our reading lesson. He concluded that he had been left all alone. Yet God answered to let him know that 7,000 faithful people had been preserved. They were preserved through the election of the grace of God. They had taken hold of the grace of God by their faith and God kept them safe. This example brings an important lesson to us evident down through time and still applicable to our day.

History is full of the records of those who suffered hardships, persecutions, and martyrdom for the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pagan Rome enforced cruel religious policies much like those of wicked Jezebel. The servants of the Lord Jesus Christ were crucified, burned on stakes, and even thrown to wild beasts for the sport of Roman citizens. The faithful members of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ chose to suffer this wickedness rather than forsake the truth entrusted to them of the Lord.

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## A LIVING SACRIFICE

by H. B. Little

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom. 12:1-2*

In this passage, the Apostle Paul urges the Roman Church—and us to whom the scriptures have been left—to offer ourselves “a living sacrifice” to our Heavenly Father. Unlike the slain beasts that were sacrificed in Old Testament days, we are called to be living and continual sacrifices. As such, the life of a Christian ought to be filled with personal sacrifices for the cause of God.

The life of Paul was the personification of a living sacrifice. Speaking by the Spirit, He said, “I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ.” Php 3:8. The lives of the rest of the apostles were not much different. Peter, speaking of the sacrifices made by them, said to the Lord Jesus, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee.” Mat 19:27.

These good Christian men were only following the example of our Head and Master. His entire life was the epitome of personal sacrifice. He left His throne and “the glory which [He] had...before the world was.” Joh 17:5. In this life, He had very little. On one occasion He compared His accommodations to that of the animals in the wilderness, saying “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.” Mat 8:20. Though He was “equal with God...[He] made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant...and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Php 2:6-8. His perfect example is recorded for us to imitate. The Apostle Peter writes, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” 1 Pe 2:21.

The annals of Baptist history are full of godly men and women following the example of our Founder. Their deep and personal sacrifices are well recorded. This is a landmark of our blessed heritage. One ancient group of Baptists, called Waldenses, were wholly driven from civilization into uninhabited valleys for their faith, as their name bears out. Dr. William Jones explains the origin of the name Waldenses in his worthy history:

*The most satisfactory definition that I have met with of the term Waldenses, is that given by Mr. Robinson, in his Ecclesiastical Researches; and, in the confidence that it is the true one...I submit it to his consideration. From the Latin word Wallis, came the English word valley, the French and Spanish valle, the Italian valdesi, the Low Dutch valleje, the Provencal vau, vaudois, the ecclesiastical Valdenses, Ualdenses, and Waldenses. The words simply signify vallies, inhabitants of valleys, and no more. It happened that the inhabitants of the valleys of the Pyrenees did not profess the Catholic faith; it fell out also that the inhabitants of the valleys about the Alps did not embrace it. History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, Page 2.*

Another example of the deep sacrifices of our Baptist fathers can be found during the early settling of our continent. While most of the settlers of the American colonies came to the new world looking for religious liberty, few of them afforded the same freedom to the Baptists within their borders. In the Minutes of the Philadelphia Association in 1770, the association recorded the great personal sacrifice of the Baptists of Ashfield, Massachusetts. For their faith, these Baptists had their houses and lands taken from them and sold for little to pay the wages of a minister approved by the “state church”. Their persecutors “fell foul on on their plantations; and not on skirts and corners, but on the cleared and improved spots; and so have mangled their estates and left them hardly anything but wilderness. They sold the house and

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## J. T. CHRISTIAN ON BAPTIST STRICTNESS

John T. Christian (1854-1925) was a Baptist pastor, author, and historian. He authored such works as "A History of the Baptists", "Baptist History Vindicated", "Immersion: The Act of Christian Baptism", and "Close Communion." Dr. Christian spent much effort fighting the influences of liberalism and Protestantism within the Baptist churches of his day.

In his book "Close Communion", Brother Christian gives a unique argument against loosening the terms of Baptist communion. Oftentimes, the argument against strictness is on the grounds of gaining numbers. For example, "If we don't serve everyone present in our congregation the Lord's supper, so-and-so and his family may get offended." In the following excerpt, Brother Christian makes the argument that our strictness, as commanded in God's Word, secures the particular blessing of Christ building our churches. He writes:

*The Baptists are strict communionists and are likely to remain such. We want to be just as close as the Word of God. If we have prospered as a people, it is because we have rigidly adhered to the Word of God. Whenever we turn aside from this well-trodden path for mere sentimentality or transient popularity, the day of our power and usefulness is gone. We are compelled to search for the old paths, and when we have found them to walk in them. Despite all criticisms and abuse we have prospered as strict communionists. The reason is not far away. In the face of all clamor we have adhered to God's Word and God has greatly honored us. What he has done in the past he will do in the future. There is neither argument nor wisdom in open communion. It is based upon mere sentiment, and that a false sentiment. We are strict communionists and we are going to remain strict.*

*This is freely admitted by Rev. J. L. Withrow, Presbyterian, in an able article in the Interior. He says: "Furthermore, in their favor it is to be said, they have proved, beyond peradventure, that narrow church doors and severe communion conditions do not bar people out of the Christian church. Against creeds and communion bars there is ceaseless outcry from some quarters. The Baptists have no chaptered creed, but their unwritten*

*creed, and England's unwritten constitution, is more insurmountable than the Thirty-nine Articles of Episcopacy, or the ponderous chapters of the Westminster Confession. Against chaptered creeds the complaints are so urgent that Congregationalists have recently made a new one—you may safely offer a dollar for every new convert which has been captured by that new creed who otherwise would not have been secured. And now the Presbyterians are wasting a heap of hard-earned money (contributed, much of it, by God's poor for better purposes), and are stirring bad blood between the brethren in an attempt to smooth off and sweeten up their creed. The claim is that we keep people out of the church, and candidates out of our ministry with such strict conditions as now exist. It sounds like arrant nonsense in the presence of the fact that the Baptist church is the strictest church we have; and yet it is growing—not as a weed, but as the Word of God is promised to grow. There is no church, so far as we know, into which it is more difficult to enter than the Baptist through theological, ecclesiastical and ceremonial conditions. An yet there are throngs pressing through its narrow threshold. Whoever cares to study this subject of easy and exacting conditions of church membership, asking which is most likely to secure accessions to the fellowship of professing Christians, should compare the history of the Baptist church with that of the liberal churches, so-called." Pages 21-23*

## BLOOD STAINED HANDS

by M. A. Brawner

*For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Rom 11:29.*

Could I say a brief word about being called of God to preach His word? When God calls any man to preach His word, there is a purpose He has in mind. God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim 2:4. The Church was commissioned to this work, and God called preachers in the Church are key in carrying this work out.

This work is the most serious matter any man could have laid upon him. Ezekiel 3:17-21 contains the solemn warning of God to those whom He has appointed as Watchmen. When I read these verses, the seriousness of what is said can be felt

down in my very heart. I believe every God called preacher should likewise feel this. God is going to call us before Him, and we will give an account whether or not we took the time to prepare ourselves and then preached as He directed us. We want to stand alongside Paul who openly declared that his hands were free from "the blood of all men" because he had declared "all the counsel of God." Acts 20:26-27.

Brethren, I fear we have many preachers among us who are in grave danger when the day to stand before the Lord arrives. How can any brother live with a clear conscience knowing he has been called and yet can sit week after week without preaching the word of God? If you read the opening verses of Acts 13, you will find the preachers together in prayer at the Church in Antioch. They were getting prepared to do the ministry to which the Lord had appointed them. It was during this time of preparation that Paul and Barnabas were called to do mission work. If you say you don't feel led to a work, I ask you, "What are you doing to get prepared?" If you're called, your first duty is to "study to show yourself approved unto God." 2 Tim 2:15. Do not think your lack of preparation clears your hands of the blood of others. You'll have to preach that blood off. Why not trust God to help you study and get prepared to do what He has called you to do? When you feel tired after a long day or a long week, look down at your hands and picture the blood of poor lost souls there. Is an hour of TV nearly as important as an hour of reading through your Bible?

Please pray for me that I will be found honoring the calling to which God has called me. I need the Lord's help everyday to fulfill it, Col 4:17. Let's all pray for those struggling to engage fully in the ministry. There are so many lost all around us. In my travels I've visited with scores of Churches who have no preaching among them, week after week, month after month, year after year. Oh how they need men of God who are willing to put the work of God ahead of the cares of this life. While men of God are buying houses and cars, vacationing up in the mountains and down at the beach, Churches are starving because God called preachers are too busy engaging in things that will one day burn up. Let's all pray that the brethren among us will be found standing alongside Paul with hands "free from the blood of all men" when the account is given.

**REMNANT BY GRACE**

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When the Pope was granted the power of the secular sword in 538 AD, he used that power to hunt, suppress, and put to death those who made up the Lord's Kingdom here on the earth. Look back over the history of the Church to learn the accuracy of this statement. It is sad to see how many have no knowledge of the hardships, persecutions, and martyrdom of those who brought the truth down to this very day. When reading accounts such as those found in the *Martyrs Mirror* written by Thieleman van Braght, the only explanation as to how these men, women, and children were able to endure such brutality is that their faith took hold on the grace of God, and He sustained them.

When Napoleon Bonaparte took the power of the sword from the Pope in 1798 ending the prophetic 1260 years, the Bible shows us how the devil continued to make war with the faithful who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," Rev 12:17. The devil now uses his art of seduction to allure the people of God to become entangled with the world. As this entanglement takes hold, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ waxes weak. A trail of spiritually dead Churches mark the records from that time to this very day.

In the scripture, we read of the witnesses for God being overcome. They lay dead in the streets of the world (Revelation 11:8). The fullness of the Gentiles will have come fully in when this occurs (Romans 11:25). Some will ask how this could have happened. The Lord said the gates of hell would never prevail against the His Church. How then could they be seen as dead? What could overcome them? We must remember the Lord's warnings that even though the forces of satan are unable to directly overcome the Church, the Church is still susceptible to being seduced by the corruptions of satan. When any Church yields to and refuses to repent of the corruptions of satan, she is truly overcome.

Take an example from the book of Isaiah. Here we read, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach," Isa. 4:1. Let's examine what this teaches.

When a Church desires to eat its own bread, it is referring to what it teaches. God has told His Church part of what He would do for them: "And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jer. 3:15. When a Church wants to eat its own bread, it wants a diet of something other than what God has chosen. To get what it wants, that Church will need a person to be their pastor who will feed them the teachings that are pleasing to them. They no longer endure sound doctrine. We all realize the words of the Lord hold true in our day when we read how the world hates the Lord and His teachings. The view of the Lord on how to live life is hated by the world. His views on alcohol, marriage, true salvation, and what makes a true church are all despised. Any Church that teaches the Lord's views will come into reproach by the world just as the Lord said in John 15:18-20. However, when a Church sets out to appease everyone it encounters and make friends with the world, it will back away from what the Lord has taught. At this point, they have chosen to eat their own bread.

Now let's consider what happens when a Church decides to wear its own apparel. When the Lord chose material to make up His Church, He chose those children of God who were wearing the same baptismal garment that He Himself put on when He was baptized by John the Baptist. The Lord clothed people with the same baptismal garment as He "made and baptized disciples" during His personal ministry, John 4:1-2. Then, the Lord directed His Church to continue this practice when He commissioned it to go into all the world baptizing disciples so that all His Kingdom people would be dressed alike. Paul reminded the Churches in Galatia of this when he explained how they put the Lord Jesus Christ on outwardly when baptized into His Church body, Gal 3:26-27.

Baptism consists of more than being buried in water after getting saved. If this was all that was required, those twelve disciples Paul encountered in Acts 19:1-7 would have been considered scripturally baptized. Yet, their baptism had to be corrected because the pattern the Lord entrusted to the Church failed to be met. Churches who want to wear their own apparel find themselves in the same place as those twelve when they met Paul. The difference is, they are willing to wear their

own baptismal garment rather than have it corrected. They feel the one the Lord issued takes too much effort. The Lord's pattern makes some people upset. Certain popular men are unqualified to serve as the administrator so the Lord's pattern is ignored to use them anyway. In this way, many Churches have surrendered their authority to be able to baptize, but they want to be recognized as sound just the same. To do otherwise would cause hard feelings. This has resulted in vast multitudes of once sound Churches declaring by their practice that they want to wear their own garments. In spite of this, they still want to bear the name of the Lord to take away their reproach.

This is the environment in which we find ourselves today. In such an environment as this, there remains a remnant willing to bear the Lord's reproach. They remain committed to teaching and practicing what the Lord has entrusted to them no matter what others may choose to do. Let us never forget where strength is found to sustain us in such times. Look to the past and see what sustained those in the day of Elijah. Remember those who faced cruelty at the hands of Roman Emperors. Think back about those who persevered when the Pope came after them with the sword. In all of this, it was God who kept them by His grace.

God will sustain all sound Churches in this day who will not surrender to make friends with the world. The Lord looked down through time and saw that the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church. I am convinced that this is one hundred percent accurate. There will remain a remnant even though multitudes will fall away and be found like the Church in Smyrna: dead though possessing a name as if they live, Rev 3:1. This remnant will remain because of the grace of God and their dependency on it.

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## A LIVING SACRIFICE

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garden of one man, and the young orchards, meadows, and corn-fields of others; nay, they sold their dead, for they sold their graveyard." Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, Page 116. In a time when people lived off their land, this was a deep and personal sacrifice offered up to the Savior by our Baptist fathers.

Other examples of men who offered themselves up to God as a living sacrifice are the ministers of early America. These men sacrificed much to spread the gospel. Isaac Backus is just such an example. Brother Backus (1724-1806) was a New England Baptist pastor and author. He traveled over a thousand miles per year preaching the gospel hundreds of times along the way. He tirelessly offered himself upon the altar of God's service. Consider his effort recorded in his personal diary of his fiftieth year:

*We are now brought to the close of the year 1774, in which I have been upheld in a good measure of health in riding 1752 miles, and preaching 176 sermons beside much other labour, and not a little of it in collecting materials and writing a history of New England. Our family are all spared in life and health, altho' it has been a dying time round us of late. For these favours we can never make due return; but may a deep sense of our obligation ever lie upon our hearts and influence our lives and conduct! The Diary of Isaac Backus, Vol. II, Page 929.*

John Taylor is another wonderful example of a living sacrifice for our Lord. Brother Taylor (1752-1833) was a Kentucky Baptist pastor and missionary. During his early ministry, he preached in a largely uninhabited Kentucky and travelled many treacherous miles to preach to just a few people. Later in his ministry, he had the privilege of working in some of the greatest revivals the state has ever seen. Consider the sacrifices made by Brother Taylor to carry the gospel to those on the frontier:

*Our range of labor was from the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah river to the back of Virginia, on the branches of the Potomac and Ohio rivers, a distance of about two hundred miles; and oftentimes among the dangerous rage of savage fury; though this circumstance took us out of the way*

*of Virginia persecution below the Blue Ridge. Neither of us was ever put in prison, though at times either beaten or driven from our meetings by wicked mobs. We oftentimes traveled a whole day from our frontier settlement to another, through the rugged mountains, without seeing a house, and our lives in danger every step we took, and when we could not reach a house, our lot was to camp in the woods. We went to many places where the gospel had never sounded before, and so great was the effect, that oftentimes the cries of the people would drown our voices. We then hoped that many experienced conversion, and some churches were built up where the Lord's name was not called on before, but to blaspheme it. Both of us having been raised to hardships, nothing appeared hard to surmount. We therefore performed a number of these tours on foot. I will name one or two them. In one instance, Redding had moved his family about forty miles from where I made my home. From his house about a week's meetings were appointed, and the distance about a hundred and fifty miles. When I got to Redding's, my horse being young, and he nothing to ride but a mare with a young colt, we concluded to take it on foot. Our first meeting was twenty miles from his house. We started at sunrise, and met a large assembly in due time. As a rich reward of that day's labor, a number of people obtained a hope of conversion from that day's meeting. We had twenty miles to the next day's meeting, and eighteen miles afterwards to get to quarters. A number came the last eighteen miles to meet us. It did seem as if the Lord blessed this foot tour more than usual. Another shorter tour we took on foot. I had staid all night at Redding's, and there being neither stable nor pasture, we turned our horses into the woods. On the next morning the rain was violent, and though we turned out in it, and searched diligently till near 9 o'clock, we could not find our horses, though they were belled. Then the council was, what shall be done? There was but little time to counsel, for the meeting was fifteen miles distant, and a very mountainous way. It appeared to us awful to disappoint a meeting. The rain slackened a little, off we set. To make this fifteen miles in*

*about three hours, something more than walking was needful. The rain set in afresh; we ran, we walked, we perspired, and received the rain from above, till there was not a dry thread on us, and met about twenty people about half after twelve. I will leave the reader to judge whether this effort was not being righteous over much; for myself immediately took such a cough, with all the appearance of the whooping-cough, that I did not get rid of it for a twelvemonth. Thoughts on Missions, John Taylor.*

As Baptists, we have a rich heritage of predecessors who willfully and freely surrendered much in this life to serve our God. They had nothing that they were not willing to sacrifice to the service of God. They packed their possessions and settle uninhabited lands for their faith. They traveled countless and uncomfortable miles to further the gospel. God richly blessed them for their efforts in this life. And I trust He will richly blessed on the great resurrection day. For the Savior has promised, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Mat 19:28-29.

So what sacrifices are we willing to make toward winning souls? What are we willing to offer to further God's cause? When we consider all God has done for us, what is our reasonable service? Certainly, we would be willing to prayerfully and eagerly attend our regular church services. Surely, we would be faithful to attend our church's business meetings. Without doubt, we would make efforts to attend and invite people to our revival meetings. If we do these, we do well. But our sacrifice pales in comparison to those made by Baptists of yesteryear. Let us pray for a greater zeal to serve the Savior. Let us prayerfully strive to do more and to give more of our time to God's service.

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