

Zion's Landmark.

DEVOTED TO THE DEFENSE OF THE PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS.

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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Zion's Landmark.

By the help of the Lord, this paper will contend for the ancient landmark, guided by its stakes of truth, and strengthened by its cords of love.

It hopes to reject all TRADITIONS AND INSTITUTIONS OF MEN, and regard only the BIBLE AS THE STANDARD OF TRUTH.

It urges people to search the scriptures and obey Jesus as the only King in the holy hill of Zion, keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

It aims to contend for the mystery of the faith in God and the Father, Jesus the Mediator, and the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Comforter.

All lovers of gospel truth are invited to write for it—if so impressed.

May grace, mercy and peace, be multiplied to all lovers of Jesus.

Near Lexington, Ga., May 8th, 1876.

Dear Brother Gold:—

I feel impressed to write on some matters I have noticed lately, springing up among some of the brethren in some sections of the country, which I fear will, without timely care and cautious attention, cause more unnecessary and unprofitable trouble, if not division, in the Churches. The first that I will notice is that of *suffrage*. The laws of our country now give men (both white and colored) the privilege to vote in all political elections. This is a legal right, and church members too, have a right to vote as they please. And the saints are required to be in subjection to the powers that be (the laws of the country). If a Church, say with ten male members, are all sound in the faith and order of the gospel, living in peace and brotherly love and christian fellowship; and an election comes, and all these ten members vote—five voting contrary to the other five; should this case of difference be allowed even an investigation in the Church? I answer—No! Because it is a legal, outside, political matter, with which the Church has nothing to do. The members, in their relation to the world, differed and crossed each other in voting; but, in their relation to the kingdom of God, they are agreed as church members. Therefore, let every member, in each of these relations, have full liberty. Never intermix them; for, so sure as they are mingled in Church discipline, distress and misery follow.

Again: some Churches are not disposed to allow their members to receive any aid the laws of the country offer, or allow them, without laying themselves liable to discipline and probably exclusion from Church privileges. Surely, such Churches have not properly investigated this subject—or, I have not. Let it be as it may; if I could offer any thought that would prove beneficial, I would be glad. The law (whether right or wrong) has made provisions for the relief of citizens involved in debt; and, to this law, saints are required to

be in subjection. Therefore it is the privilege of church members to receive any aid the laws give them, as much so as other citizens. If, however, a church member takes advantage of this law to defraud his creditors, or avoid paying just debts—as soon as this is manifested, then is the time to commence gospel discipline with him. Not for taking a homestead (for that was legal), but for defrauding his creditors; for, this would be a violation of the gospel rule. But, if a member, after receiving what the law allowed him, shows that his object was to retain his land and other property to support himself and family, and use his land and stock to make all he could to pay his just debts as fast as possible, and still fills his place as an orderly member in the Church, should he be dealt with and cut off from Church privileges? I do think not! And, as the Church is furnished with a full and complete rule of discipline in the New Testament, there is no necessity for Churches or Associations to make additional rules or pass resolutions. Invariably such proceedings have resulted in discussion, disputation and division. But let each Church watch over her own members in brotherly love and christian forbearance, and, when necessary to execute discipline, be sure to conform to the following rule: Gal. 6: 1.—“Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” This done and all would move on to the best interest of the Church and to the glory of God.

Again: some brethren seriously object to church members taking part with fellow-citizens in worldly organizations or secret societies, for farming or agricultural purposes. This, I think, is the privilege of church members as they stand related to the world as citizens of our country, as much so as any other citizen. If they think improvements can be made in cultivating the earth and in receiving the benefits of their labors, and none of their brethren should complain if in these worldly movements their conduct is legal and honorable; and while, in the relation in which they stand to the Church of Christ, they are sound in the faith and fill their places as orderly members, I see no reason why the Church should complain. In this life, while saints stand related to the kingdom of God, they are also related to the world and must have to do with it while they remain in this imperfect state. In every case where the saints are forbidden to unite with others in public or secret companies, it is such that are openly

or secretly wicked, or such as pretend to be devotees to the service of God, but disregard his word, having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof. Notice 2nd Cor. 6: 14, to the end of the chapter. The Church is charged, in her spiritual relation to the kingdom of Christ, to be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, as there is no agreement with the temple of God and idols; no concord with Christ and belial, nor with believers and infidels, “Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Again: Eph. 5: After speaking of many shameful, wicked things done by many in secrecy, it is written: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret, for all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.” The Church of God is the highest organization under heaven, and is separate from every other kingdom or order that ever has been or ever will be. Differing in doctrine and practice, no matter how fair they seem, they are of this world and must perish with the using, after the doctrines and commandments of men; and the saints are commanded to touch not, nor taste, nor handle.—The Church of Christ is called his love, his undefiled, and is but the one—the only one of her mother, the choice one of her that bare her—while Anti-Christ is represented by the three-score queens and four-score concubines and virgins without number. Yet, the Church of Christ is in no way related to the hosts of Anti-Christ in all their plans, doctrines, practices, names, orders and unscriptural movements. While the Church of Christ is thus separate, she is no where required to provide for the worldly relations and pursuits of her members in the business of this life; If she is to the smallest extent she surely is required to the greatest extent, and would be engaged in a heavy business which her Master has not required. But, she does well to watch over her members in a Church relation alone—in christian charity and brotherly forbearance, executing discipline according to the rule given by the King in Zion, which rule can never be improved upon nor made more plain or binding upon the saints. “Peace be on as many as walk according to this rule, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”—Gal. 6: 16.—And we may safely say, contention, debate, strife and division, be on all such as undertake to improve and

make this rule more plain and binding, by passing and establishing resolutions of their own; and no wonder, for it would be treating the Great Head of the Church with disrespect, if not contempt. Oh! that we all could be content with the following language: “For the Lord, he is our judge. The Lord, he is our law-giver. The Lord, he is our King, he will save us.”—1a 33: 32. May the Lord deliver us all from being moved by carnal feelings in our dealings one with another. While Anti-Christ without is seeking our dissolution, may we strive for peace within or among ourselves.

D. W. PATMAN.

Remarks:

Brother Patman's experience has been long and valuable as a Baptist. I am sure his advice is excellent on the question of politics. This subject should be kept out of the Church—should never be made a test of fellowship.

As to homesteads, &c. When any of our Churches or Associations have passed resolutions, I suppose their aim and spirit was to secure just what brother Patman contends for: though it would have been much better if there had been no necessity of passing them. We should adhere to the Bible in that as everything else, “That no brother go beyond and defraud,” &c. The bible is sufficiently expressive. It matters not what the law of the land may provide, or allow, it never gives a Baptist a right to violate the law of God.

As to the question of human societies, any organization of the world in any sense connected with religion, or that has any form of religion about it, as a chaplaincy, &c., is to be avoided by Baptists, as broth P. says. I should like to see our people producing more meat and bread in our land; for the earth is to feed us. Agriculture is the most important form of worldly business. Any proper efforts, whether individual or in union with other farmers, for this purpose, all may be good: but people who unite in such organizations are so apt to blame those who do not join them. In matters not wrong in themselves, but not commanded in the Bible, such as the one referred to—brethren should be left to do as they please.—Ed.

Davidson County, N. C.

Elder P. D. Gold, and Brethren:—

Through ZION'S LANDMARK I desire to express some thoughts on the subject of religion. And, for a starting point, will adduce Rom. 3: 11, which reads as follows:

“There is none that seeketh after God.”

Now, if I can have light that I may unfold the mystery of the gospel contained in this text, I shall not please the carnal mind, the legal profession, or in short, not one of Adam's family, save those born of God, born of the Spirit—born again. If I do, then the offense of the cross hath ceased; for the preaching of the