

For the Biblical Recorder. Let the Truth be Spoken.

MR. EDITOR.—Your correspondent (Veritas) of the 15th ult, seems to be in doubt in regard to the truth and importance of the christian religion.

We should not go to the differences of men to prove anything; but to the standard: so in this case we should go to the Bible and see who follows it.

But your correspondent says his "difficulty is not with the doctrines of the Bible &c." "But the gordian knot, which I can not possibly untie" (And I am certain he has not it himself) is found in the following statement.

"The Lord Jesus has, in the gospel, promulgated his commands, accompanying them with the most solemn sanctions, promising his favor to the obedient, and threatening the disobedient with his displeasure, when at the same time, his laws are declared in language so vague, and ambiguous, that they can not possibly be understood."

"In the name of reason, I ask can an institute, or religion, subject to so serious an exception be divine?"

I answer that the christian religion is not subject to any such exceptions.

I confess that some passages, in King James' Translation, are burdened with ambiguity, owing to the state of the language at present. And some words are anglicised which should have been translated.

But the difficulty, after all, which seems to be in his (Veritas) way is that men differ about baptism. Now my answer to this is in the Scriptures prove anything "under the sun," it is the immersion of believers in water, without the least intimation that infants should ever be substituted for believers, or sprinkling for immersion.

Divine sanction, precept, precedent, or example cannot be produced for such a change. And I would suggest a supplement to the prayer Veritas has compiled, for some of his "throne-besiegers," in the following words: Oh Lord, we know thou hast not commanded us to baptize (or sprinkle) infants, but it is more convenient, and we think will answer as well as the immersion of believers.

He (Veritas) says: "The Koran possesses more evidence of divine authenticity." "The muslims are more united than christians."

Answer. DEAR RECORDER:—My young brother, C. Durham, of Wake Forest College, thinks that because I said a certain sermon did not grow out of a particular text, I ought to know what does grow out of it.

It has been the burden of prayer and of thought with me, not so much to know what the unpardonable sin is, as that I may never be guilty of that sin. The sermon referred to in a former communication represents the unpardonable sin to be something like neglecting the great salvation, or slighting the calls of mercy until the Spirit grieved takes his everlasting flight.

The text for the sermon was Matthew xii: 32, "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

If there is any similarity between the text and the sermon, I am not able to see it. According to the sermon, the unpardonable sin may be committed without uttering a word; but according to the text and the context it appears that it is committed by speaking only.

Jesus cast out Devils by the Spirit of God. But the Pharisees said: Matt. xii: 24, "This fellow doth not cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the Devils." In reply, Jesus said: vs. 31-32, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

In the same connection Jesus says, vs. 34, 36, 37, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." If the Pharisees had not already committed the unpardonable sin by what they said, they must have been in great danger of it.

If this is a correct rendering of the passage, then those who attribute the work of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners to the wicked one, are in a fearful condition. This is done by the scoffers, and perhaps by some who profess to be christians.

Now, I believe that it is a dangerous thing to grieve the Holy Spirit; for God says: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." As they (the heathen) "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Ephraim was joined to his idols, and God said: "Let him alone." I could weep over sinners, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away.

As to those who crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." All this may be done without speaking a word. But the text says, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." If the sinner reject Christ, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." But when the builders returned to the stone which they disallowed, it is still the head of the corner.

As to other statements which I made, "grave interests of the public demanded it," and "due and sufficient cause existed. The preacher to whom reference was made, had been often written to and urged to go to important cities, as if their

But salvation depends on Christ alone. Again, the following card has been distributed over many portions of N. C., and is read in books and in the corners of picture frames and in other conspicuous places.

TEN EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION. For Young Christians.

- 1. A full surrender of the will to God. 2. The removal of a burden of sin, gradually or suddenly. 3. A new love to Christians and to Jesus. 4. A new reliance for the Word of God. 5. Pleasure in secret prayer, at least at times. 6. Sin or sinful thoughts will cause pain. 7. Desire and efforts for the salvation of others. 8. A desire to obey Christ in his commands and ordinances. 9. Deep humility and self-abasement. 10. A growing desire to be holy and like Christ.—1 John iii: 3.

Are you a Christian? If not, why? We will review this card: 1. Who makes a full surrender of the will to God? 2. While conversion does remove the pardon of sin, the unpardonable sin is represented as doing the same thing. 3. A new love to Christians is a scriptural evidence of conversion. 4. Unconverted persons relish the history and the sublimity of the word of God. 5. I don't know, but I think it probable that some unconverted persons take pleasure even in reading prayers in secret. 6. Sin or sinful thoughts certainly give pain to some unconverted persons. 7. It was stated in the RECORDER, that during the revival in Raleigh, some unconverted persons seemed anxious about the salvation of others. 8 and 10. Some persons desire to obey Christ in his commands and ordinances, and it may be that they even desire to be holy and like Christ. But the great difficulty with them is they desire something else more than they desire to obey Christ and to be holy like him. 9. I once knew a sinner who professed deep humility and self-abasement.

Here then are ten evidences of conversion, all of which, save the 1st and 3rd, may be claimed by the unconverted. Christians may and ought to have these evidences of conversion; but they must go farther—they must have the evidences that are required in the Bible. These are given in plain language and without these no one should be satisfied. Is there not a cause?

But I am trespassing on precious space which I wish to see filled by abler pens than mine. Allow me to say to our young brother, preserve your communication five years, then read it carefully, and if you are not afterwards ashamed of your want of perspicuity, your superfluous words, and your criticism on "two and two," you are a pluribus unus. Read you Bible again, and you will see that although pastors were left alone, yet even Paul, an inspired evangelist, went not alone on his extensive tours. B. G. COVINGTON.

Resolutions of the Baptist Church at Wilson, on the acceptance of the resignation of Rev. W. C. Lindsay as its Pastor.

WHEREAS, it having seemed good to the great Head of the church to oblige our present pastor, Rev. W. C. Lindsay, to withdraw his labors among us by reason of his declining health; we deem it a fitting occasion to express to him and to the public our deep regret at the termination of his ministry by the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1. That in accepting the resignation of our much loved pastor, we can not refrain from the expression of our deep and heartfelt sorrow that the afflicting hand of Providence has made it necessary.

Resolved, 2. That the manner in which he has discharged his duties during his short stay among us—his ability in the pulpit, and his assiduous and very acceptable pastoral labors had so increased our congregations, and so roused up the life and activity of the church, as to inspire the hope that God had intended him as an instrument of long continued usefulness in this part of his vineyard.

Resolved, 3. That since it has seemed otherwise determined by divine Providence, we avail

ourselves of this method of assuring him of our deep sympathy in his afflictions, and our prayers that a change of his mode of life for a time to more active habits may so renovate his health and strength as to enable him to return to his ministerial labors, and be long preserved as an honored instrument in the service of his divine Master.

Resolved, 4. That these resolutions be spread upon the church book, and that a copy be presented to our beloved pastor as a memorial of our affectionate regard, and regret at parting with him; and that a copy of the same be forwarded to the BIBLICAL RECORDER, with a request that it be published in the same, and also request the Religious Herald to copy. Adopted in special conference meeting on the 26th of Feb. 1871.

H. C. MOSS, Mod. G. W. BLOUNT, Clerk. The church has unanimously called Bro. Thos. R. Owen to fill the vacancy. His engagements in his school, and other churches will preclude the possibility of his immediate acceptance. He will probably not take formal charge until about 1st of June. In the mean time can not some brother or fall of love for the cause and the Holy Spirit, visit us and give us a series of meetings? We see that Bro. Pritchard is out on missionary labor. G. W. BLOUNT.

For the Biblical Recorder. Is Repentance Preached?

What was the first doctrine taught in the gospel? Ans. Repentance. Who taught it? Ans. John the Baptist, and Christ, and the apostles. Said John: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And none others are for that kingdom. Said Jesus: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." So the twelve: "They went out and preached that men should repent."

How could it be known that they had repented? Ans. By their fruits. What were their fruits? Ans. Holy behavior; but chiefly, their confession of faith. What is Repentance? Ans. A new faith, and a changed heart. The old faith of "the Pharisees and Sadducees," that is, that they were the children of Abraham, was not the fruit of repentance. Baptism would have changed their outward condition, but not their heart. What are the two great points in conversion? Ans. Repentance and faith. Are those two doctrines now taught by preachers? This is very doubtful. Because preachers do not represent sinners as guilty criminals before God, with wicked hearts which must be recognized. The sinner is not told that repentance brings him to God a convict seeking and begging for mercy, when divine favor can not be expected except entirely for the sake of Christ. The gospel of our time consists almost exclusively of one all-absorbing idea, that is, "giving one's self to Christ."

The sinner is instructed to believe that his change consists in ceasing from hostilities against Jesus Christ; and to "lay down his arms"; that his continuance in sin is great unkindness to our Savior; and that all the person needs is to give himself to the Lord. The sinner's attention is directed, not to the baseness of his heart which must be cleansed and renewed; but he is reminded of his outward course of actions and is made to believe that if he reforms his behavior, then he is a christian. And the poor soul is left under the impression that religion consists more in our kindness to our Redeemer, there in mourning over our vile heart, our complete forget of all favor, and our deep sense of helplessness, and reliance upon mercy alone for salvation. The lost man is impassionately told, and even entreated, to "turn about"; that he has only to change his direction, and "come right now to Christ. The unconverted is told to come just as he is.

Saying repentance has an intelligent look to God; it is called, repentance toward God. It as much denotes our sense of guilt and deserves wrath of God's holy law, as faith expresses our reliance upon Christ's redemption. Saying repentance compares our guilt with God; it is called, "godly sorrow,"

It measures our desert with God's claims; and his righteousness in taking vengeance for our vile enmity and opposition to Him. Saving repentance counts up the cost—not who her we shall hold out if we start; for there is no repentance in that. Neither does repentance require whether we ought to deny ourselves, and "forsake ungodliness and worldly lusts," for that is understood and well known. But the cost is ascertained to be—reformation, but regeneration; for it fully learns that God will not receive "dead works," but "a new heart." And the penitent finds on correct calculation, that not a cent less than the righteousness of Christ will give him a discharge from all the penalty of sin and of its law. He finds on God's book is recorded death without remedy against, all who depend on their best will, or their best do.

Notice is published on God's throne of justice, that "it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." He comes to reckon the value of his own obedience, of his own repentance, in a word, the worth of all his righteousness, and he learns that God don't want it; and Satan won't have it, and the sinner don't need it; and he must perish with it all. So the penitent comes to the full determination that relying upon Christ as his only righteousness, with no confidence in himself, unfeignly afflicted with his own vileness, and with no healing for it, but the blood of Christ, he starts on the christian warfare, "hoping against hope," and "rejoicing in tribulation."

Now is not repentance dropped by preachers from the catalogue of the gospel? And are not sinners instructed to come to Christ without it? Are not young and old, children and adults, told to "give themselves to Christ," when and where repentance is lost sight of? Men love a religion which has no repentance in it; and if we publish a gospel without it, we can soon fill our churches with empty professors.

MARK BENNETT. Pastors' Salaries. We trust that when our excellent brother T. H. P. completes his articles for the RECORDER on "Pastors' Salaries," that he will favor the readers of the RECORDER with Scriptural proof, that such an office did exist in the Apostolic churches.

Learned men have to acknowledge that if the Apostolic churches had ministers for officers they had a plurality. And as we have departed from the New Testament model in this respect, I should be pleased for the truth's sake for some good brother to give scriptural authority for the change. (Baptists should give scriptural authority.)

Will Brother Mills allow an earnest brother to give an opinion? It is that our churches would be apostolic in respect to officers, if they would not imitate the sects in making the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ official dignitaries.

It is a very sad mistake to make the words used in Eph. iv: 11, and I Cor. xii: 28, to denote the gifts of the church of God, designate church officers. It secularizes the whole gospel system. As to the two Greek words translated Bishop and Deacon, the first named properly means and represents a superintendent or overseer, (the highest gift in the church). The other word (Diaconate) is the word almost invariably used by the sacred writers to designate the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ and is so translated except in the third chapter of first Timothy and Phil. i: 1; and here literally means superintendents and ministers.

I think that James lived at Jerusalem during his life, Paul preached at Ephesus three years, yet there is no intimation in the New Testament, that either of them had any official connection with any church.

The Apostle Paul gloried only in being a minister (Diaconate) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bro. A. B. Earle is the example of the only order of minister that I can find in the New Testament. And he does good; and gets pay too.

But worthy citizens ignore, the different gifts of the church which God has given "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body (church)

of Christ," and establishes in their stead pastors, and the ministers instead of going everywhere preaching the word in accordance with their commission, stay at home and complain that they are not supported. They will not preach in accordance with their commission and therefore the churches will not pay them. J. P. MONTAGUE.

Consolidation, Again. We have often protested against all propositions to abolish, transfer, or sell out the Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention. All such suggestions tend to cripple its operations and should be carefully excluded from our denominational organs and from the floor of the Convention.

The greater part of the following article, from the Christian Herald, is in harmony with our views; but we respectfully protest against the proposed "consolidation of the two mission boards." Our mission board is doing well. Its operations have recently been enlarged and it has the confidence of our people. This confidence can not be transferred, can not be sold. Our people intend to have boards responsible to our churches. It has not been long since, while sitting within a few feet of where we are now writing, we requested Dr. Yates, of Shanghai, (we put this in because a prominent Baptist of Richmond asked him: "where are you from?") to give us his views on the consolidation of Northern and Southern boards. He said: "I would sooner increase the number of boards to excite more interest in the work of missions. I sometimes feel that it would be better for me to throw myself upon the Baptists of North Carolina in order to enlist an increased sympathy with my work." We should seek to draw such men near to our hearts, instead of talking of transferring them to strangers. But here is the article:

A writer in the Religious Herald, recently, advocates the merging of the two Mission Boards into one, and suggests the propriety of dropping the Sunday School Board from the list of boards, and letting the American Publication Society attend to the work that the Sunday School Board is now doing. We deprecate the discussion of this subject; but if it is to be continually thrust upon us, we are in favor of deciding it at the next meeting of our Convention once and forever. So far as the consolidation of the two Mission Boards is concerned, we are inclined to believe that it would be beneficial to the cause, and save some expense. One board out at end to Home and Foreign Missions without much difficulty, and fully as well as two boards can. The work is the same. The field only is enlarged.

But there is a necessity for the existence of a Sunday School Board just as much now as there ever was. The idea of getting the American Baptist Publication Society to accomplish the work of this board is simply saying that we are not able to do it; and if we were to get that Society to do our work for us, it would be a disgrace to Southern Baptists. The Sunday School Board has a great and noble work to do, and if Baptists all over the South will throw away their prejudices and pet plans and rally around this board, it will be able to accomplish this work.

If this work can be done better by the American Baptist Publication Society, and we will not gain say that financially this Society is better prepared to do it than our Board, then for the same reason, the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Board of our Northern Brethren are better prepared to conduct our mission work, both Home and Foreign, than our boards are; and therefore we ought to be away with them and turn their work over to our Northern brethren. Will the correspondent of the Religious Herald agree to this? He would but he following the logical conclusion of his reasoning in doing so. It would be far better for our cause, and all our Boards would be much more successful in their respective fields, if our brethren would stop discussing plans and preparing new plans and combinations, and go to work with a will in supporting the Boards in their efforts to carry out their present plans. What we need now is cooperation upon the part of the churches with the Boards. Divisions among ourselves will result in no good and much harm to our cause. Baptists of the South cannot afford to be divided. A more difference of opinion as to plans should not be our constant theme. Let us divide us in our opinions.

For the Biblical Recorder. Andersonville.

I walked sadly through the stockade which contained for years from fifteen to forty thousand Yankee prisoners of war. Yes, very sadly, or though an enemy, who attacked our rights, and invaded our homes, they were fellow creatures still, with the same Heavenly Father, and the same capacity for misery or happiness.

The original stockade contained thirty acres, but was subsequently enlarged. It is still formidable in its appearance with its tall upright beams of hewn logs placed side by side, and every few hundred feet the remains of the "stoop," yet standing, where the sentinels were placed to watch day and night the desperate horde within the enclosure. About twelve feet from the inside of the wall, the "dead line" is still clearly marked, and woe to the man who passed beyond it.

The ground undulating, and a limpid stream goes gurgling on, seeming to say: "Men may come, and men may go, but I go on forever." I conversed with intelligent gentlemen in that vicinity, and with gentlemen, who stood on guard there for months, and was assured that the same rations were always issued to the prisoners as to our soldiers on guard. I know that they suffered fearfully for delicacies, medicines—yes, even the comforts of life; but did not our men do the same? And who blockaded our ports, and arranged the cartel for the exchange of prisoners, and finally, when their prisoners outnumbered ours, refused to exchange altogether? And did our soldiers suffer nothing immured in Yankee prisons? I hear the echoes of many voices resounding from sombre walls, and seagirt islands. I remember that a letter sewed by many hands within the lining of the coat of an exchanged prisoner, reached me safely from Johnson's Island. That letter portrayed in vivid colors the horrors of prison life; how each night, our men lay down with the gnawing sense of hunger unappeased—with an insufficient quantity of bed clothing to protect them from the rigid cold, and disease in their midst; and the writer exclaimed: "Over this prison door should be emblazoned the gloomy inscription of Dante over the gates of hell: 'Ye who enter here, leave hope behind.'"

A few hundred yards from the stockade is the Andersonville Cemetery. Step softly now, for here thousands sleep their last sleep—Yea, 13,716 have fought their battle, and after life's fitful fever, sleep well. "Peace to their ashes!" The ground has been confiscated by the U. S. Government, and as we approach, the first thing that meets the eye is:—A National Cemetery, Andersonville, painted in large black letters. I approached the Southern entrance; and on either hand were stretched many rows of turfed mounds with their white head-boards glittering in the sunshine. There are two broad walks that intersect each other at right angles, dividing the graves into four squares, and where they intersect, an oval grass-plot is laid off in the center of which a tall flag-staff rises in solitary grandeur. No flag was flying when I was there, and I was glad of it; for I never see one since our misfortune, without feeling like exclaiming in the words of Madam Roland on her way to the guillotine Oh Liberty! Liberty! how many crimes are perpetrated in thy name!"

The soldiers were buried in trenches, for the length of the squares, except here and there where a narrow path intervenes, the earth is raised a smooth, even mound beautifully turfed, about six inches above the ground. The head-boards are very close to each other, and have the names of the soldiers with the date of each death, and name of Company and Regiment. In the North-east square, it is very sad to see many graves marked "Unknown."

A record was kept of all the deaths, and a board with name, Company and Regiment painted on it, placed at the head of each grave; but when the Yankees were making raids on that section of country, it was thought that their object was, to release the prisoners, and the latter were removed from Andersonville for several days, and during that interval the Registrar was not able to keep a correct record, and this is the solution of the "Unknown graves."

The broad central walks are covered with pure white sand, and the black Georgia pebbles is scattered over it, which has a very pretty effect. On each side, is a row of water-casks, in evergreen in this climate, and here and there a cedar, a magnolia, and the broad leaf magnolia keeps vigils over the silent dead.

There are several massive head-boards sent by loving hearts to mark the spot where some dear one sleeps. One, I read with a pang at my heart for those loved ones at home.

But another inscription aroused my Southern blood. Son of Dr. W. H. and E. Clayton Co. Dr. 4th Reg. O. V. C. Died. A Prisoner of war to the Rebels, July 1864. Age 19 years. He trusted in Jesus.

The Rebellion is dead—buried deep beneath the ashes of ruined homes, amidst the wreck of equal rights, and earthly hopes. She sleeps calmly the deep sleep of despair—let her rest! Shakespeare was wrong when he made Anthony exclaim: "The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones; It is an ignoble soul that will insult the dead." On a line with the Southeast square are six solitary graves, with name at their head and feet. A name with Company and Regiment is on each head-board, and beneath, simply this: None. July 11th, 1864. The Yankee soldier, who had the Cemetery in charge told me, that these were desperate men, tried by a court-martial of their own soldiers and condemned. Our authorities permitted them to send a flag of truce to Washington to inform their Government of the decision. It was approved of, and upon the return of the messenger, was carried into execution.

It was the saddest sight I saw at Andersonville Cemetery—these six graves. Methinks, I can see the July sun falling in flickered bars through those six gallows' erected within the stockade where thousands of prisoners were ready to execute justice upon their six guilty, but weary hearted comrades. I turn from the scene with a shudder of horror.

Up and down the graveled walks hung from trees and posts, frames containing printed verses of poetry, and the Act of Congress in regard to National Cemeteries. To the left of the Southern gate is this beautiful stanza: "On Fame's eternal camping ground Their silent tents are spread, And glory guards with silent sound The bivouac of the dead."

A little further on, to the right we read: "The hopes, the fears, the silent tears, That marked the bitter strife, Are now all crowned by victory, That saved the Nation's life!"

My only comment is that "Sorrow's crown of sorrow, is remembering happier things." Again we read: "Whether in the prison doors, Or in the battle's van, The fittest place for men to die, Is where men die for men."

I endorse this sentiment fully, but I hope I will be excused from giving my full consent to its application. One more stanza, and I am done: "A thousand battlefields have drunk, The blood of warriors brave, And countless homes are desolate, Thee! the land they died to save."

This comes like a wall of anguish from some wounded heart, and finds a responsive chord in this Southern land, where all the homes are desolate, and Alas! the land not saved. OLIVA.

Wm. Bruce, Simpson, the distinguished evangelical preacher of the English Church, once said that the longer he tried, the more he felt the importance of adhering to the following rules:

- 1. To hear as little as possible what is said to the prejudice of others. 2. To believe nothing of the kind till I am absolutely forced to do so. 3. Never to drink into the spirit of one who circulates an ill report. 4. Always to moderate, as far as I can, the unkindness which I am kindred to towards others. 5. Always to believe that if the other side were heard a fair and equal account would be given of the matter.

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