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W. P. B. in Rome?
The historical basis of the Roman theory is even less satisfactory than the Egyptian. It claims that Peter selected the city of Rome as the scene of his apostolic labors, founded the church there, and was its first Bishop. Now, this is purely a historical question and must be settled by historical evidence. And in view of the startling and momentous consequences that logically flow from the Roman theory and are consistently and boldly avowed by its supporters—consequences entitling the Roman church to the exclusive claim of being the church of Christ and the channel of God's grace in salvation—we have a right to demand that the evidence in the case shall be clear and undeniable, and, in legal language, the best evidence that the nature of the case admits of. We have already seen the unsatisfactory shape in which the universal tradition of Peter's being in Rome has come down to us. But it is further to be noticed in reference to this tradition that it refers only to the close of Peter's life. It associates Peter and Paul at Rome, and Paul we know was not there till toward the close of his life. In fact, Origen expressly gives the tradition only this extent. He says, that Peter having preached to the Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, toward the end of his life came to Rome and was crucified with his head downward. But this does not meet the requirement of the Roman theory that the selected city of Rome as the scene of his life-labor. What evidence is there of that? We are cited to a statement of Eusebius in his *Chronicon* that Peter came to Rome under Claudius A. D. 42 (ought to be 44), presided over the church there twenty-five years and suffered martyrdom in the last year of Nero, A. D. 67 or 68. But Eusebius is the first one to make this statement, and he lived in the fourth century. It rests only on his authority. Jerome and others simply follow his statement. It is certainly chronologically false and rests upon a mistake of Justin, Justin (A. D. 130-166) had reported under mistake that Simon Magus went to Rome during Claudius' reign, had won many followers there, and gained so great reputation that a statue was erected to him on an island in the Tiber. A statue was found there in the year 1574 but not of *Simon Sanctus* but of a Roman divinity *Simon Sanctus*, which Justin mistaking the inscription supposed to be a statue of Simon. "Tradition at once laid hold of this statement and, in its zeal to glorify Peter as much as possible, sent him on the heels of the supposed Samaritan arch-heretic to Rome, to vanquish the sorcerer there as triumphantly as he had before done in Samaria." For such a weighty superstructure as Romanism we have a right to ask a better foundation than vague and unreliable tradition. To show the unreliability of this sort of evidence an illustration or two may be given. Papias busied himself in collecting what traditions he could of our Lord's unrecorded sayings and discourses. He professes to have used great care as to the sources whence he obtained these traditions that he might give only those that were well authenticated. This is one he gives as a veritable discourse of our Lord on the times of his second coming: "The days shall come, in which vines shall grow each vine with ten thousand bunches, each bunch with ten thousand branches, each branch with ten thousand twigs, each twig with ten thousand bunches, each bunch with ten thousand grapes, each grape containing twenty-five measures of wine. And when any of the saints shall take a bunch, another shall cry out, 'I am a better bunch, take me, through me bless the Lord.' In like manner also all animals using these kinds of food, which are received from earth, are to become peaceful and harmonious, subject to man with all subjection. And when Judas the traitor believed not, and asked—'How shall these predictions be brought to pass by the Lord?' the Lord said, 'They shall see who come to them; for these are the times of which Isaiah prophesied, 'The wolf shall lie down with the lamb.'" Now, what evidence in any statement is to be given to a man who hands this down as a veritable discourse of our Lord? It may be said—"But yet he could tell the truth about Peter's having been in Rome." Precisely so. And so a man who is a habitual liar can some times tell the truth; but who will believe him? Irenaeus, one of the most judicious, clear-headed, temperate and discreet men of all the "fathers," states as a positive fact that the chief part of our Lord's ministry took place between the fortieth and fiftieth year of his age. He defends this statement partly by inferences from John viii: 56-57 but chiefly by an appeal "to the testimony of the gospel and to the elders who had met John in Asia, that John had handed down this statement to them; and some of them had seen not only John, but others of the apostles, and heard this same fact from them, and testify to the

truth of an account of such as has been given." Now here is a tradition positive and circumstantial in its statement, but which must be false, contradicting, as it does, the whole chronology of the New Testament. We have a right to demand better evidence than mere tradition, mere tradition. We have a right to demand the best evidence the nature of the case admits of, and that would be, in this case, historical evidence in Scripture. Surely if the Savior did invest Peter with the prerogative alleged, and if he did select the city of Rome as the scene of his apostolic labors and found the church there, and make it the seat of his primary, we would naturally expect to find some evidence of this in the Scripture history. But Scripture history gives us none—not a scrap even. Of the contrary its silence furnishes very strong negative evidence against it. The Acts gives us a history of Peter's labors up to the year 44. After this the history is silent concerning him, and we catch only an occasional glimpse of him. We next find him in A. D. 50 at the church conference in Jerusalem, called to adjust the difficulties started by Judaizers. Next, we see him in Antioch, probably soon after this conference, and when Paul reproves him. After this we lose sight of him altogether. Where is he laboring? Not at Rome, it is morally certain. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, written about A. D. 57, the apostle alludes to Peter (I Cor. ix: 5) in such a way as naturally leads to the inference that he was then not resident anywhere, but as a true apostle and missionary, going from place to place preaching the glad tidings. In his epistle to the Romans, A. D. 58, he makes no allusion to Peter's labors in Rome at that time or at any time before, which he almost certainly would have done if that was the scene of Peter's life-work and if he founded the church there. Surely Paul in the salutations he sends, would have sent one to Peter. In A. D. 61 the apostle is carried a prisoner to Rome. The book of Acts informs us of his meeting with the Christians of that city and that some of the brethren went out to meet him "as far as Appii forum and the Three Taverns," but not a word about Peter. The apostle was a prisoner there two years. During this time he wrote his epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians. There is not a word in them about Peter's presence or labors in Rome, or his being the Bishop of the church. Can anybody believe that the apostle in none of his epistles would ever have referred to Peter if he was there or had founded the church there? This brings us up to the year A. D. 63, and no evidence that Peter had ever been in Rome, but negative evidence that he had not. It is said, however, that there is scripture evidence in the fact that his first epistle is written from Rome under the name of Babylon. This is, indeed, the universal testimony of antiquity. There are very strong reasons against it; however, and in support of the opinion that it was written from Babylon on the Euphrates—so much so that some Catholic authorities, Hug for instance, adopt this view. But waiving that, and granting that it was written at Rome, most critics, from its probable relation to the epistle which Paul wrote during his imprisonment at Rome, especially that to the Ephesians, think that this epistle of Peter could not have been written before the year 63 or 64. But this would put him in Rome only toward the end of his life as Origen says. No evidence here of Rome being the scene of his life-labor.

The limits of a news paper article do not allow any elaborate discussion of the question which has been considered. The foregoing is intended to give merely some indication of the line of argument. Romanism is a wonderful system. It is not easily attacked. He who attacks it must take care, or he will find that he has butted his head against a post. It is the most plausible and powerful religion that ever was invented. But it rests on falsehood, and culminates in blasphemy. But to prove it—*aid opus, hoc labor est.*

W. W. Greenville, S. C.

Correction Corrected.

BRO. EDITOR.—The celebrated Talyrand, administered a cutting reproach in a satire to the presumptuous when he said "Every body knows more than every body." "E. G. Harrell" in a late number of the *RECORDER* said some things for my "enlightenment" about what a certain preacher said on the tobacco subject. "E. G. Harrell" says he thinks he knows the preacher—that he never used tobacco excessively. I generally "make sure of my evidence" as the old lawyer advised his pupil to do—and my witness is said preacher's wife. She says "I smoked her to death for three years." I thought that was excessive. This discrepancy is between "E. G. Harrell" and the preacher's wife (perhaps he knows her). "Let him that is filthy be cleansed."

I am not ashamed of the above sentiments, but having no boyish ambition, nor any of that peculiar pride, which is tickled by seeing my name in print, I remain as before,

O. C. O'NEAL.

Worldly Conformity.
Some church members enter into all the amusements that the world proffers, and they devotedly patronize all the vanities of the gay and fashionable. Such a course of conduct is nowhere taught in the New Testament. If profane Christians would earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit to lead them in the way of holiness; that they might not be led in the vineyard of their master, they would not be found in the maze of dance nor at the party of pleasure, where wine makes the occasion one of excessive hilarity and excitement. Earnest consistent Christians feel that there is a work for all Christ's followers; that they are not their own, but bought with a price, even the blood of Christ. They deem it a sinful waste of time and means to prepare for and go to such places of worldly amusement. For in such places a Christian's light does not shine. The spirit that predominates desires not to glorify God. People who enter into such worldly amusements, cannot pray with the Psalmist "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." While faithful earnest Christians may not participate in the party of pleasure in which the sole object is personal adornment and undue excitement; still they are not by any means cut off from social privileges. They may meet every Sabbath in the Sanctuary, engage in the Sabbath school, prayer meeting, and attend the public ministry of the word. They may meet in the family circle, and interchange views and feelings, strengthen each others' hopes, share their joys and divide their sorrows and mingle their prayers. (In all the memories of the past, the visits of Christian brethren and sisters stand out fresh and green like roses in the desert wastes.) Besides these privileges, Christians may meet in various societies whose objects are the good of man and the glory of God. Whatever elevates while it relaxes the mind is innocent amusement; but whatever excites the passions and distracts the mind and obliterates the true ends of our being, is detestable and sinful. If we are doubtful of the propriety of any course before we decide upon it we should earnestly pray that heaven may guide us in all our understandings.

MARY E. TATUM.

Discontented.

There is a great deal being said through the *RECORDER* and elsewhere, as to the most successful plan of raising funds for different objects. Elder Dodson once beautifully remarked that, "first causes were always more important than second ones." What then is the first cause which obstructs the wheels of the gospel cart here on earth? Why is our earthly Zion made to languish? Why is it that Christians give so little, and so grudgingly? What is the first and great cause? A discontented spirit within the heart of Christians. You may suggest your plans, and fix system after system, and it will all avail nothing, until discontent is removed from the heart of Christians, and they come out fully on the Lord's side. When Christians are contented in the love of Christ or the religion they profess, they are always prepared, ready and willing to do their duty, yes, all that is necessary with such is to know that God requires it, and they are always ready, willing, anxious to do or perform. The poor widow was a contented Christian, she was a devoted, yet a full Christian, hence no great inducements nor appeals from men were necessary to stimulate her to action, no indeed, nothing was necessary but only to know what her Lord required or demanded of her. The stimulant or prompter, being an ever abiding guest, ruler and director in her own breast. Yes, this stimulant, prompter, guest, ruler and director, is Christ without mixture in the soul. Mary possessed this when she sat at the Savior's feet and heard his words; yes, she sat there contentedly and drank deep from the well of salvation. She being fully on the Lord's side, was always engaged in his service, in every good word and work, yes, she was content in the love of Christ. Thank God we have a few poor widows, and Marys yet in the world, who are contented in the love and service of their blessed Master, Christ the Lord. But if we speak of a host of others, what will we be obliged to say? If we speak the truth, which we intend to do at all hazards.

O the discontented thousands who seem to be "neither cold nor hot," who profess for God and work for the Devil. The agents of Satan, vice and folly, can raise more money, and do it easier than the man of God. How do they do it? Many thousands of discontented professors of religion who are discontented, and are not willing to be governed, guided and directed, alone by religion. God and the Bible, fall in with the world, and contribute to those various agencies of sin, vice and folly, and when the man of God presents the claims of the gospel to this people they have but little or nothing for him. How many young men but what will pay 50 cents at a show door, bar-room doors and even

at the Devil's tavern, (the grog shop) and then the next day give a deaf ear to the requirements of the gospel and charity. There is too much ad. made over second causes, or efforts, and not enough over first causes. People ought to strike at the root of the matter, yes, at the very fountain head, and not the branches of the tree, and streams of the fountain, so much. No plan nor system will flourish as long as professors of religion are so discontented as to cause them to resort to the world for their chief pleasure. A religion which causes one young man or lady to become discontented and resort to the vanities of the world for enjoyment, is altogether different from the religion which causes others to be contented in the love of Christ, and in his service. Could agents persuade professors to come out fully on the Lord's side, then they might expect their calls to be heeded. I do think pastors of churches ought to make more pastoral visits. They in my judgment have one half, or two thirds of their usefulness by this neglect. If pastors would consume a few days previous to their church meetings in pastoral visits, the change of things would be great for good. If pastors would frequently visit the entire membership of their respective churches, and get their minds set on things heavenly and divine, thus they would be contented in the love of Christ, and would not be discontented and running after Satan and the vanities of the world for pleasure, but would find their happiness complete in Christ Jesus their Lord. If pastors could get the entire membership of their churches to come out fully on the Lord's side, then their church houses would be filled to overflowing, and their salaries easily raised, and missionary calls heeded with gladness. Pastors visit the membership of your churches, and show them the position they occupy in this world as Christians, beg them to come out fully on the Lord's side. O that decision of character and a spirit of contentment in the love and service of Christ, characterized the churches throughout the inhabited world.

R. Q. A. TEAGUE.

From New Hampshire.

I was much interested in Dr. Hooper's account of the Skinner family. It carried my mind back to the past when I knew them. I graduated at Dartmouth College in 1831, which was a wonderful year for revivals all over the country in which many professional men were converted. The celebrated revivalist, Dr. Nettleson spent several months there, and was greatly instrumental of good. In the Fall of that year, I entered Andover Theological Seminary, with a class of 70, many of whom were afterward highly distinguished. That noble trio, Wood, Porter and Stuart, were still living that were there when the Seminary was founded. Soon Dr. Porter died and Dr. Thomas Skinner of Philadelphia was invited to his place, which he filled with great ability for several years, when he removed to New York where he preached and instructed us as long as he lived. I know him well and highly esteemed him for his his humble, devoted piety. Charles Skinner his brother, was one of the best men I ever knew, distinguished by consistent piety, untiring energy and good practical common sense. To him and bro. Wait, do Wake Forest College and the Convention owe very much. I well remember Dr. Thomas E. Skinner when a school boy. I well remember a Camp Meeting at Wake Liberty about 34 years ago, how deeply he was awakened—how fervently he pleaded for mercy. I have watched him with much interest for many years. I hope he will be long spared to bless the world.

D. F. RICHARDSON.

"J. B. R." and the Southern Baptist Convention. It is to be regretted that bro. "J. B. R." who, I presume, is bro. J. B. Richardson, should have written as he has done in the *RECORDER* this week, about the "visitors" who may attend the approaching convention being entertained by the Raleigh brethren.

If it was his purpose to put a stop to "visitors" going at all, that purpose will, no doubt be accomplished to some extent; for not many will feel free to attend, after what bro. J. B. R. says about visitors; unless the Raleigh church put a high repudiation of his piece.

Bro. J. B. R. thinks we might not take our wives, children, sisters, &c with us to the convention, unless we "board them while there." What will the wives and daughters of Baptists say to this? If none attend the convention but "delegates," we would give much for the whole concern. But the "Raleigh church" are able to do all they undertake and will; bro. "J. B. R." to the contrary notwithstanding.

W. B. HARRELL. Clayton, N. C.

CONSTITUTIONS.—For the convenience and accommodation of Sunday school men, there will appear in the next number of the *Home & Foreign Journal*, specimens of Constitutions for Sunday school Conventions in the States and Associations. The brethren, everywhere are urged to make immediate steps to hold and organize such school Conventions in States where they do not exist, for the purpose of more thoroughly organizing and systematizing the Sunday school work among the Baptist churches of the South.

W. B. HARRELL, Sec. S. B. O'NEAL, Cor. Sec. pro tem.

How to become a Good Writer.
It is hardly possible for any one, without an acquaintance with our best writers, to become a popular and acceptable contributor to the press. Though the same truths are iterating and reiterating to every generation, yet if we can clothe them with the graces of expression that come from studying the writings of Addison and Goldsmith, of Shakespeare and Jeremy Taylor, we may gain the ear and the heart of those we aim to instruct and improve. The style in which a truth is clothed is often as important as the truth itself. A King in rags commands no homage, but wrap him in purple and the populace bows the knee. Clothed in the robes of expression a common thought becomes impressive. The literary aspirant must consider not only the topics upon which he is inclined to write, but those which the public wish to hear about. When the *Lost Arts* are brought before us arrayed in all the graces of rhetoric, the perfection of elocution, and the splendor of oratory we listen spell-bound. But when the voice ceases, and we go to every-day life, who care we for the *Lost Arts*? We wish to know how to double our trade, to improve our lands, to meet our obligations, to raise our children to rise higher than ourselves in the scale of wisdom and virtue. He who can most skilfully minister to these universal wants will be our most popular writer. In putting thoughts upon paper the young writer may with safety follow two or three rules.

First. Let each sentence have one positive meaning, and only one.

Second. Let the meaning be expressed with clearness, force and elegance.

Third. Where the subject admits it, employ illustration, allusion, quotation, to enforce and adorn what you say. There is a world of meaning in that declaration of St. Mark, "Without a parable spake he not unto them." Generalities in writing or speaking fall to ground, but let them be put in the form of a story, an illustration, a proverb, a maxim, a picture, and they are like those ancient spears which had a hook as well as a point; they could grapple as well as pierce. Shakespeare sees everything double and the subtle force of his genius inculcates lessons of high morality while seeming only to amuse and delight.

—Phrenological Journal.

STATE BOARDS.—The Sunday school boards of the different States will find that they can accomplish very little until they form a convention, or convention, in the States. Therefore, they should issue a call for a convention, to be held at the most convenient time and place, of Sunday school workers. The assembly met, it should organize for permanent action, and endeavor to procure the organization of auxiliary conventions, and establish some method for raising funds for Sunday school purposes. Baptists of the South, arouse and put on the Sunday school armor! You are too negligent and forgetful your duties to the young. Throw off your torpor, and take hold of this great work with a will.

S. BOYKIN, Con Sec. pro tem.

The Convention of West Va., now making a Constitution has decided that ministers may be members of the Legislature. The civil law ought not to impose any disabilities, but as a general rule ministers ought not to have time to talk politics.

The chief treasures of the church are not her stores of silver and gold, but her living members, with their spiritual endowments of varied character and grades. And how greatly would a revival of primitive faith draw upon these spiritual resources, for the supply of the perishing heathen! The Missionary cause would not be considered as making well-nigh its exclusive appeal to ministers of the church; but the merchant, the artisan, and the farmer, each anxious to give himself to the Lord's service, would present not a stunted list of his earnings, but himself, his personal labor, and his life to the great work of evangelizing the heathen.—Dr. Wm. R. Williams.

The next session of the Ministers and Deacons' meeting of the Central Association will be held with the Flat Rock Church beginning on Saturday before the 5th Sunday in March 1872. Eld. W. T. Walters D. D. is appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon. Eld. W. T. Brooks, D. D. alt. Elder A. F. Purefoy is appointed to preach the Missionary sermon; Eld. Chas. E. Taylor, alt. Elder W. T. Brooks and W. B. Royal by appointment will debate the following question: Was the apostolic age more favorable to the propagation of Christianity than the present. Brethren of the Ministry are earnestly solicited to attend, as we expect to institute some new plans of operation.

W. C. ALLEN, Sec.

UNION MEETING OF THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION.—The next session of this meeting will be held at Brown's Meeting House, Shampon county, beginning on Friday, before the 26th Sabbath in March. Elder B. G. Covington is appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon and Elder W. M. Kennedy Alternates. The questions for discussion are, the following:

1st. Exposition of Romans V chapter, by Elder J. L. Stewart.

2d. What is the best means of promoting sanctification in attendance among the members of our churches? The discussion to be opened by Bro. G. Chere.

3rd. Is the mode of licensing ministers, as practiced by our churches, in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament? The discussion to be opened by Elder J. F. Faison.

J. W. LANE, Sec.

The next session of the Ministers and Deacons' meeting of the Mt. Zion Association will be held with the church at Beres, Orange county, Friday before the 21st Lord's day, in March. The constitution of that meeting will be amended so as to allow delegates to attend in that body. It is hoped that the several churches composing that body will send a delegation of five. A full attendance is desired on that occasion.

M. S. FARRAR.

The Ministers and Deacons' meeting, and the Sabbath School Convention of the Mt. Zion Baptist Association, will meet on Friday, the 29th of March, 1872, at Beres, in Orange county. About five hundred are desired. It is very desirable that all the churches be fully represented.

W. G. WILSON, Mod.

Working Deacons and G. W. PUMEROX, Mod.

Weak Churches.
Is it an evil among us to have many churches? Can we have too many? Bro. Wm. Turner and 'Scopio,' seem inclined to answer these questions affirmatively. The former writes, in a recent issue of the *RECORDER*, and says, "If brother Harrell had seen what I have—the harm that has been done us in this way, (by the organization of so many little, weak inefficient churches,) he would not have written a word against 'Scopio's' article."

I would ask bro. Turner, What makes any church "weak and inefficient?" Is a church necessarily "weak and inefficient," because it cannot, at first, count its members by scores, fifties and hundreds? Do numbers necessarily imply strength and efficiency? Where lie the real power and efficiency of even those churches that have large numbers? Will not every one answer, do we not all know, that the few really constitute the church in fact? A few, and often a very few, earnest workers seem only to be alive, and to keep the cause of religion before the world. Were they not in the body; the balance, (so far as activity is manifested by them) would be as literally dead, as the physical "body without the spirit is dead also."

Bro. Turner says, "Some years ago a feeble band was organized in Salisbury and it never had any life." A little feeble band was organized at Greensboro and it died." We thought the Greensboro brethren were still alive; as bro. Richardson has been zealously at work there, and we learn, that a fine, brick church-house is going up for the Baptists in that town. That looks like life.

But what of this? Does not brother Turner know, that many years ago a small, and apparently, "weak, and inefficient" band was organized by Eld. Robt T. Daniel in the old Baptist Grove in Raleigh? They did not die. Look at that people to-day. They were neither "weak nor inefficient," and why? Not because they were many. Not because they were the learned, or the rich or influential of that city. And yet they lived; and struggled on, in the midst of those who sneered at them and predicted a failure. But still they live! Now, according to bro. Turner's method of building up the Baptist cause, those Raleigh brethren ought to have applied for membership to "some adjacent Baptist church; and bro. Daniel, the missionary, should have first obtained the consent and cooperation of the aforesaid "adjacent" church, until such time as, "in the judgment, of those best acquainted, (who they would be able to see) alone, and then be constituted into a church; not before." If that policy had been adopted, there would have, probably, been no Baptist church in Raleigh to day! And if adopted by our Missionaries in the future, there will be no more new churches to trouble bro. Turner, "Scopio," or any body else, in our good old State.

Some year or so ago, bro. E. Jordan constituted a church with others, out of material found in the thriving town of Winston and vicinity. (A place where there ought to have been a Baptist church organized years ago.) That "little band" has since grown, and still is growing, in influence, and strength and power; and they are not very many, even yet. But according to bro. Turner, they should have united with some "adjacent church," (say New Friendship, perhaps about 6 miles out of town), and not attempted to organize, when they were so few; "weak and inefficient." What influence is the New Friendship church exerting upon the community of Winston and Salem? If it has any at all, being 6 miles distant, they must be alive indeed.

If there be just ground for complaint that we have too many "weak and inefficient" churches, let us seek to render every one more efficient; but not by an attempt at consolidation, for all such attempts will certainly prove miserable abortions.

A church, whether many or few, rich or poor, is an efficient body, in proportion as they exhibit the spirit of the Master, in the spread of the gospel.

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his," will apply to churches as well as to individuals. And a church that persistently neglects the divinely appointed means of their own spiritual development, and thereby fails to become a *fact power* in the town, or community, or neighborhood in which it is located, is a weak and inefficient church; no matter how large its membership, or how learned its pastor, or how many wealthy names upon the church-roll. And, on the other hand, a body of poor, unlearned, and apparently feeble men and women, who are alive to the true interests of religion in their midst, daily manifesting the power of the gospel in their own lives, and working together as true "laborers of Christ," in the church, in the Sunday School, in the prayer meeting, in public and in private, in season and out, is a strong church, an efficient church; a gospel church; and would to God we had hundreds, where we now have tens, and thousands where we have hundreds of such all over the world. This is the true church. Say, my brethren, have we "too many" in North Carolina? Would any man blot out a single one? God forbid. WM. B. HARRELL, Clayton, N. C.