

The Biblical Recorder.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1888.

THE ELECTION OF GRACE.

We have read somewhere that when Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, resigned his crown to his son, he retired to a monastery where he amused the evening of his life in endeavoring to make a number of watches keep the same time; but finding himself unable to make any two of them go exactly alike, his failure led him to reflect upon the folly of attempting to force men to think alike.

Very many are the opinions held among mankind concerning the doctrine of predestination and election. Some deny them; others pretend to fathom their great depths and thoroughly explain them; others still advise that they be let alone, or, at least, be touched very lightly, and preached very sparingly.

We confess that age and experience have made us more careful in forming our own opinions, and more tolerant of the opinions of others, especially upon such profound doctrines as these about which we are now writing.

In the discussion of such themes, it is wise to confine ourselves to the word of God, and hold under restraint human curiosity, which, as Calvin has well said, in its insatiable, insatiable thirst, is ever wandering into forbidden labyrinth, and soaring beyond its sphere, as if determined to leave none of the Divine secrets unscrutinized or unexplored.

While there may be some objections against the doctrine of election which we cannot satisfactorily explain away, and some inferences may be drawn therefrom by its enemies which may reach our sensibilities, and while its relation to, and harmony with, other doctrines of the Holy Scriptures may not be very clear to our apprehension, yet we believe that no doctrine is more clearly, forcibly and frequently set forth in the word of God, or more generally believed by the people of God than this is the doctrine of election.

Especially do we feel it to be our duty to write this article for the benefit of such inquirers as the young convert who sought an interview with us not many days ago. He was an intelligent young man who desired to unite with the church, but was troubled about the doctrine of election. We put to him some questions, which he promptly answered as follows:

Q. Do you believe that all mankind, or only a part of them, will be eternally saved? A. I believe that only a part of mankind will be saved.

Q. Do you believe that men will be saved by their own efforts, or by the grace of God? A. I believe that if men are saved at all, they are saved by the grace of God, through the righteousness and death of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Q. Do you believe that God saves men by accident, that is, without design, or according to His purpose previously formed? A. Of course; He saves men, as He does all other things, according to His purpose.

Q. If this purpose was formed yesterday, or last week, or last year, in other words, if this purpose is not from before the foundation of the world, God is changeable. But He says "I am the Lord, I change not." Therefore, if the Lord has a purpose to save men, has He not always had it? A. I believe He has always purposed to save men.

Q. Do you not see that if you put your answers together in the order in which they are given, (1) a part only of mankind will be saved; (2) they will be saved by the grace of God, through the death and righteousness of Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; (3) they will be saved according to God's purpose; and (4) this purpose is eternal, you will have a pretty clear statement of the doctrine of election? A. Indeed, it is so plain and simple, I am surprised that I should have been so much perplexed about it.

here, as there is none in the matter of salvation. The gospel address was as free, accountable beings, and awards them accordingly. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

Obj. 3. Election leads men to neglect the means of grace, and the cultivation of Scriptural holiness, since they may rely upon the purpose of God which cannot be frustrated, and live indolent, ungodly lives.

However unbelievers may thus abuse the doctrine of election, since Christians will hardly be guilty of such wickedness; for while they do not rely on what they do or do not do as the ground of their salvation, yet they have several reasons why they should abound in good works.

Obj. 4. If God has elected a part of mankind to salvation, there is no need of preaching the gospel, since the elected will be saved any how, preaching or no preaching.

Another illustration. God has ordained that seed-time and harvest shall continue in the world. Shall we, resting in God's good purpose, fail to sow, and plow, and manure, and expect a harvest? Vain expectation! Our harvest would be famine. The decree should encourage us to use diligently the means and implements of successful husbandry, in hope of a rewarding harvest.

God's gracious purpose embraces not only the end to be accomplished, the salvation of His people, but also all the means necessary for the accomplishment of that end. Among these means is the preaching of the gospel. Therefore it is our reasonable duty to preach the gospel, or have it preached, to every creature. But could we see no other reason for the performance of this duty than the plain command of Christ, this ought to be sufficient.

But we have not time or space for the consideration of other objections. There may be many others, some, perhaps, answerable. Unanswerable objections may be urged against the benevolence of God, the duty of prayer, and other clearly established truths of Revelation. We must believe them whether we can remove all the objections or not, and bring our minds and hearts into harmony with them, as revealed in the inspired volume.

This glorious doctrine of election, we wish to say, before we leave the subject, is a source of strong consolation to them who have fled for refuge to Christ their Saviour. In the midst of the perplexing difficulties and sore trials and afflictions of this fluctuating world, it is a consolation to know that God knows and loves us, has always known and loved us, and has treasured up in Christ, for us grace for all times of need, the sure pledge of glory eternal hereafter.

We cannot forbear quoting the burning words of that godly man and brother, Dr. H. A. Tucker—"How consecrate to God am I and all that I have! What is this world? What are its allurements and its business? What are its cares, its sorrows, its bereavements? Suffice it for me to know that God has from eternity meditated my salvation; that his love for me had no beginning and will have no end. Let his will be the law of my life. Let me be absorbed in him. Let my soul forget all but God. As his affections have dwelt forever on me, so let mine benevolence dwell forever on him. The relation between us is a personal relation, not an official one; it is not cold, and distant, and formal; it is a union of hearts, such as can exist between two created beings; the deep, glowing, rapturous love of eternity; mine; eternity; it is the only thing that can measure the love that is directed to me, unworthy creature that I am, and the chief of sinners! My soul is overwhelmed!"

On Sunday, 8th inst., the pulpit of the First church, Raleigh, was occupied by Rev. G. Williams in the morning, and at night by Rev. S. H. Thompson. Rev. C. Durham preached for the Tabernacle in the morning, and for the Fayetteville Street church at night. Three persons united with the Tabernacle at the morning service. There is a decided interest in the Fayetteville Street church, and Pastor Thompson will preach every evening this week. There was one profession of faith during the Sunday evening service, and a number asked for prayer.

Rev. A. C. Dixon, of Baltimore, has received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the Second church, St. Louis, Mo. This church recently called Dr. Hoyt, of Philadelphia, at a salary of \$10,000 a year. Bro. Dixon declined the call, and his church added one thousand dollars to his salary.

Miss Alice Purefoy, daughter of the late Rev. Dr. G. W. Purefoy, died at her home near Chapel Hill, on the night of March 30th. The church has lost one of its most earnest and efficient members, and her family is most sorely bereaved. Miss Alice was beloved and admired by all who were ever ready and anxious to see her Master's will. She obeyed His last summons with calm and trustful resignation.

"My church says, 'You are going to the Convention. We will have the money ready.' No part of my salary either. I have some brethren and sisters here who do not give me potatoes and pumpkins at the end of the year charge up on pastor's salary. Every brother and sister in North Carolina ought to read your editorial on 'Your Pastor.' But alas, those who need it most will never see it."

The union of the papers was entered into with no intention or desire to unite the Conventions. So far as the RECORDER is concerned, there has never existed more than a mere sentiment in favor of such union.

In regard to the starting of a new paper for the Western Convention, the RECORDER has no concern whatever. We would not seriously care if every separate church in the Western N. C. Convention started an organ of its own. The brethren of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention stand by the resolution passed during the session in Durham, when the corresponding messengers to the Western Convention were appointed. That resolution reads thus:

"Resolved, That these correspondents bear the Western Convention fraternal greetings and expressions of our sincere interest in every department of their work, and say to them that, in their judgment, at any time, the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the denomination in the State can be best served by a union of the two Conventions, we are ready to consider such a proposition."

It will be seen from this that the whole matter was left to the brethren of the Western Convention, where it belongs.

Personal and Other Items. Rev. Dr. D. W. Gwin, of Kentucky, has removed to Decatur, Ala. Rev. H. W. Norris, of Ballentine's Mills, called to see us on Saturday.

Rev. A. D. Hunter, of Cary, called to see us on Friday last. He is well and hopeful. Drs. Reese and Manly, of Wake Forest College, were in Raleigh on Saturday last.

Rev. W. B. Oliver, of Marion, S. C., was in Durham, holding a series of meetings with the second church. We regret to learn of the critical illness of the beloved wife of Rev. W. H. Lawhorn, of Carthage, N. C.

John Ripperdt, son of Rev. C. J. Ripperdt, of Charleston, West Virginia, was killed by the cars on April 4th. Rev. C. C. Newton, of Durham, has sufficiently recovered to be up and out, and expects to be at work soon.

Reedy Creek church, Wake county, on Saturday, March 31st, honored Bro. W. M. Sorrell to preach the gospel.

WESTERN DEPARTMENT. JOSEPH E. CARTER, EDITOR. Read the label on your paper and you will see the day your subscription expires. If we make any mistake, write us at once.

Communications must reach us in Hendersonville on Wednesday morning of week before issue of RECORDER, to insure prompt insertion: mar7-3t.

The owner of the RECORDER is running it on a cash basis. If your paper does not come to you, you may know that your time is out. Please do not write to us to send you word what you owe, if you wish to continue your paper, but send us the money, first, and we will credit you on your back dues, and set you forward on another year, and in a short time you will see printed on a label pasted on the margin of the paper your name and the date to which you have paid. If you think there is any mistake, write to us about it. mar7-3t.

The subject of uniting the two Conventions is about being opened up in this paper—that our brethren give their matured convictions as to the reasons why, to them, it is, or is not wise to unite the Conventions.

One brother from the State Convention has already given us his reasons against the union, and we are as far apart; second, we are working very well in our Western Convention, &c.

By way of rejoinder, a third person may show that there is something peculiar about North Carolina Baptists, and that, for the reasons, we have given, we cannot be compared with the Baptists of Tennessee and Texas and all the other Southern States, and Northern States, and they may only one Convention.

This matter may be likened to the marriage of widower Jack Smith and widow Polly Jones. At their age in life, they look on matrimony from a rather business like standpoint.

The meeting in Greensboro closed on Tuesday night, the 3d inst., having been held at the residence of Rev. W. R. G. on the 1st and 2nd inst. Two weeks we had Bro. E. VanDeventer with us. His earnest preaching took a firm hold on our people, and the interest grew daily from the beginning.

Our members are greatly built up and strengthened and encouraged. There were 96 professions of faith, and a majority of these were men, some of them heads of families. We will receive a good number of them. A large number of them belonged to the Presbyterian congregation, and of course most of these will join the Presbyterian church.

Resolved 1st, That we regret that it becomes necessary for the union of our body and for the further advancement of the cause of Christ to call another to take his place; not for any want of love or interest on his part.

Resolved 2d, That we return to him our heartfelt thanks for the valuable services rendered during his stay in our midst, and for the noble example of attitude with which he showed us our duty and bore with our infirmity.

Bro. G. H. Church moved with his family from Brevard to Charleston on April 4th. He will be a strong man in the ministry of Swain county, and the Tennessee River Association. Among the native preachers of these mountains there is no able and more useful man, nor one who is more in the spirit of the progress of our denominational work. We commend him to Bro. D. K. Collins and to other members of the Charleston church, who, we suppose, will be true rock-aways with him in their Master's work.

We can expect no more than a difference of opinion, and hence we are not surprised that a few brethren called a meeting last week in Asheville, and, assisted by Bro. W. W. Wells, decided to call a larger meeting for the next week for the purpose of considering the possibility of starting another Baptist paper in Western North Carolina. If we are correctly informed, one object of starting the new paper is to oppose the union of the two Conventions. On the other hand, brethren are writing to us, and talking to us, and asking us to favor the Western North Carolina approving the consolidation of the papers and expressing their hopes that the Conventions will be united; and Bro. Bailey published recently that the following brethren, besides about fifty others, had written to him approving the consolidation of the papers: "Rev. S. M. Collis of Bakersville, Rev. D. E. Nelson of Horse Shoe, Rev. F. M. Jordan of Hayesville, Rev. W. A. Nelson of Asheville, Rev. G. S. Jones of Hendersonville, Rev. W. H. Ollis of Spear, Rev. Dr. J. L. Carroll of Asheville." Add to this that Secretaries B. Griffith and I. T. Tichenor, whose Boards have supplied means by gifts of books and other articles, and our mission work, are both pleased at the union of our papers and one of them has already expressed, at the same time, his desire for our Conventions to be united.

Bro. C. E. Lee, so long a prominent worker in our Western Convention and in the First Baptist church, Asheville, has been recently elected III. His many friends here in the State will sympathize with him. He married one of the good daughters of Bro. F. M. Jordan.

Elder Enoch Morgan is one of the faithful preachers and good men and citizens of the west and of Buncombe county. He is growing too old to do much more in the ministry, and has given up charge of his last church. May God bless him and his aged companion in these latter days.

We made our home, during our recent visit to Haywood, with Bro. Wiley Johnson. It is always a pleasure for us to accept the hospitality of him and his kind wife. By the by, Bro. Wiley says he would like to see a union of the two Conventions, and he is another prominent brother of Haywood who favors the union.

Voices from Jackson, Swain and Haywood are heard in our correspondence in reference to the consolidated papers and our Conventions. This is but the beginning of what we shall hear. It is our duty to be ready to meet them, and we will speak our minds, even if in no more than a few words, on both sides of these questions.

Bro. A. B. Thomas, of Macon county, will accept our thanks for the interest he manifests in our consolidated papers, by sending in renewals and by writing such encouraging words. His words are additional evidence of the growth of interest in the brethren over the whole of Western North Carolina for the RECORDER, as it is now run.

No wonder the church house at Locust Field has been so much improved, when such brethren as W. M. Johnson, J. Y. Smathers, L. N. Pinner and others, and such ladies as Sister Mings and others, have so earnestly worked for it. Some of those brethren worked with their own hands for six weeks to accomplish this object, besides giving their money.

The Asheville Citizen says: "Up to 9 o'clock last night the city police had made 165 arrests for the month of March. It seems strange that the State should lead the arrest of the South in the number of arrests and the amount of fines." It is not so strange after all, when you consider to what extent bar-rooms are increasing in Asheville, Mr. Citizen.

Rev. C. B. Mings is opposed to the union of the Conventions, because, for one thing, the matter is so long that it is not too much to desire that the delegation of such a Convention to meet together. As we said last week, when we gave Elder Collis's opinion in favor of the union, we expect to give the opinion of brethren on both sides, as we meet up with them.

We would like to remind the churches of our Western Convention that our Convention is not yet organized, and but little has been heard so far of our mission work. Our Treasurer has promised to publish his receipts soon, in this paper. Look after your churches, brethren, and see if they are coming up to the experience. Our missionaries are at work, and the needs of their families require that we should think of their wants.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Voice from Swain County on the Consolidation of the Papers and the Union of the Conventions.

Bro. Carter:—As to the consolidation of the Western N. C. Baptist and Biblical Recorder, I am well pleased that you have undertaken to warm a friend to the RECORDER as I was to the Baptist. I think we can have in the consolidated papers all, as a religious journal for our Baptist people of the whole State of North Carolina, that we need.

Our prayers and efforts should next be, to make of the twin one great State Convention and Baptist bulwark of truth, to honor, love and work for God in every season.

When we become one, let us have three divisions of the State—Eastern, Central, Western—with the Convention to rotate its sessions in each division. This, I think, would suit every body from Currituck to Cherokee.

Shon we become one, let us only think and speak for one, but I have thus spoken with nothing but the present objects in view. We should feel as much love for Christ and his people on the sea-shore as we do for those of the hills and mountains of our State.

I do hope and pray that all sections or local matters of past organizations may cement and become one to aid you and Bro. Bailey in the new undertaking. Let us hope that the strong will help the weak, and that the strong will have a liberal push wherever found within North Carolina.

Your brother in Christ, JOHN S. SMILEY. [Bro. Smiley is one of the prominent ministers in Swain and Superintendent of Public Instruction for his county.—WESTERN EDITOR.]

An Important Point in Madison.—WESTERN EDITOR. [Bro. Carter:—Although I have never met you, I have learned to feel very tenderly toward you; and now as you and our good Bro. Bailey (one of the Baptist great ones) have taken your tasks together, I do wish you and he, with our wisely edited organ, God speed. When I sit and read the good news from all parts of our State, my heart is made to feel sad to think that we have no representative here. I think it such an important matter that I have asked a few of our friends to form a committee, who represented the Missionary Baptist at a union church-house near here, has left.

We are few in number and poor; but own an interest in a house, together with Madison county, and we would like to see our denomination (as usual in a union church) is doing much; but as the Methodists have a very good preacher, as well as a smart man, of course they are taking the lead, and one would think that it was only a Methodist who would do a lot of work of change and also to subscribe to the building. Our trouble now is in not having a good shepherd. I feel like now is the time for the Baptists to take hold. E. B. ATKINSON. Barnard Station, Madison Co.

Transylvania Union Meeting. The next Union Meeting of Transylvania county will be held with East Fork church on the fifth Sunday in April. All the churches are earnestly requested to attend this meeting. Important questions will be discussed. C. M. GALLAMORE, for Com. Brevard, April 2d.

Bro. Jasper L. Morgan, of Clyde, is one of the leading Baptists and most prominent citizens of Haywood county, in a letter of recent date, referring to statements made in the RECORDER that there was not a man in Haywood county who favored the union of the Conventions, says: "There is at least one man in Haywood county who does favor the union of papers and Conventions, and hasn't any aspiration to run a paper." Writing of the prosperity of his church, he says: "The baptizing was postponed till the fourth Sunday, but was a very prosperous approved now, and more expected to join them; will be near 35 additions; some by letter. The young men's prayer-meeting is in progress; most all the young men have been baptized, and there are a few of the older members that have refused before. We re-organized our Sunday-school last Sunday; hope to enroll 300, and average 125 during the summer. J. L. MORGAN."

Kind Words from a Sister. Sister D. J. Allen, of Sylva, Jackson county, was one of the first friends of the RECORDER. Now that the papers have consolidated, she knows how to consider and appreciate the move. In a private note she writes, under date of April 2d: "We are all pleased with the RECORDER, and we will continue to take, read and pray for it."