

BIBLICAL RECORDER.

THE ORGAN OF THE NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS—DEVOTED TO BIBLE RELIGION, EDUCATION, LITERATURE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

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CONVENTION SIDE-SHOWS.

Last May when the Southern Baptist Convention met in Richmond, Va., a smart Northern brother was on hand at the solicitation of some society to deliver a lecture on the evening before the organization. The trick was a shrewd one, and so far as putting money into the pocket of the lecturer, proved a great success. He took his collection before the secretaries of the Boards had drawn upon the delegates for funds, got the first shot at the ducks, as it were, bagged his game, and took the next train for Chicago. This lecture did the Convention much harm. It destroyed the religious character of the entire session, and had much to do with making the meeting in Richmond one of the poorest ever held. We feared then that other wise brethren would take the hint and appear in Memphis just a day ahead and arrange with some impetuous society to raise the wind by a lecture, provided the spoils were divided. If such should be the case we advise the delegates and visitors who read this to give such lecturer a wide berth. Don't hear him. Don't contribute one cent to any such person or purpose. Unless this is done, we shall have lecturers and showmen of all kinds moving around with the Convention for the purpose of raising money for personal and secular purposes. The Southern Baptist Convention should have no side-shows connected with it. It is a Convention of Christian men, assembled for the purpose of transacting business for the Lord, and aside from its legitimate work should not allow lectures on "The Bastille," "Buck Bone," "Poor Kin," "Git there Eli," or anything else a moment of its time or attention. Such lectures may be very proper, and even profitable at other times and places, but are a nuisance when delivered at our Conventions. If a meeting on the evening of May the 9th must be held, let Bro. Pennington, the pastor of the church, get some minister full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom to preach a sermon in the church, and let it be that no fancy music is rendered and no collection taken.

The Biblical Recorder.

Having received, from a source I am bound to respect, a request to furnish for publication the main facts in regard to the early history of the BIBLICAL RECORDER; and believing that many, if not most, of its present subscribers know little, if anything, of its early history, I cheerfully comply with the request; at least so far as my knowledge of the matter will enable me. Another fact has some influence, which is mentioned in the request, that perhaps no individual, now living, had the opportunity of knowing the facts so well as myself. As this article is preliminary, I do not propose in it to enter on the historical; but wish to utter some statements, which I hold to be important and true in regard to the value of the RECORDER to us as a denomination. Of all the enterprises in which the Baptists of North Carolina have engaged, none has accomplished more for the general benefit and prosperity of the denomination than their organ—the BIBLICAL RECORDER. It had from its earliest issue been the warm and generous friend and advocate of all our other worthy enterprises—the main spring which put in motion and pressed forward our general denominational work; and this it has done without "fee or reward." While other departments have required, and justly, many thousands to make them efficient, our organ ever stood on its own basis, has ever been an individual enterprise, and, under the changes that have occurred, has had to take care of itself. After its mission of more than a half a century, it still lives, carrying light, joy and gladness to the hearts of thousands in its weekly visits. A religious journal, well edited, may be styled an Inter-Religio-Communicant. Its place in the family cannot otherwise be filled, or its value estimated, for inculcating right-

teousness and truth, and in pointing out and rebuking error.

2. Although the RECORDER has done much in the past for the Baptists of the State and the cause they represent, and has been a *sine qua non* to the present success of our mission, educational interests, Sunday schools, &c.; beside being a weekly religious instructor to the many families into which it has gone; yet it has not accomplished all it might and would have done for want of a more generous patronage. By the strenuous and well-nigh ceaseless efforts of its different proprietors and the active co-operation of some of its many friends, it has, beside the service rendered and already referred to, reached its present improved condition. Had it been more liberally sustained and patronized in its earlier history and struggles, it would doubtless have shed a brighter light and on a more extended scale; moulding the characters of many, who merely claimed to be in favor of missions, &c., into intelligent, active, working members. But human foresight, as well as human excellence, has its limits. Time, observation and experience are essential to forming the best plans and executing them in the best manner. Yet Divine Wisdom sees fit to frustrate or overturn even these, or any other human devices, when not in accordance with his will.

In an address by one of our gifted and energetic ministers, he made in substance the following declaration: "Our Baptist fathers acted wisely when laying the foundation of our denominational progress and prosperity, in issuing a paper, organizing the Convention, and establishing a literary institution or college." Having labored in connection with these agencies some twenty years I was prepared to recognize the compliment to "Our Fathers" and endorse the correctness of the statement. But however wise to arrange and bring into existence these agencies, it required no little devotion, self-sacrifice and labor to keep them in active and effective operation. The present generation of Baptists in our State are, perhaps fortunately, ignorant of the many struggles and trials through which "the Fathers" had to pass ere their cherished object was realized; while some, and not a few, like the Israelites in the wilderness, fell by the way, leaving their successors to carry on the good work.

In closing I would say, what I have written can have no practical bearing upon the past—that is done and gone—but some things on this sheet may be suggestive as to the future.

In my next I propose to give some facts in regard to the early history of our organ and some co-incident circumstances connected therewith. J. J. JAMES.
Yanceyville, N. C., April 29, 1889.

Plain Doctrines of the Bible Plainly Stated by a Plain Preacher.

NUMBER SEVEN.

Regeneration.

Regeneration, or the New Birth, is often mistaken for and used synonymously with the term Conversion. They are really two entirely distinct words with entirely different meanings; and yet there can be no regeneration until reformation or conversion has permanently taken place in the daily walk and conversation. Regeneration has direct reference to the spiritual, and conversion to the natural or physical life. There can be no regeneration without conversion; but there may be, and often is, conversion without regeneration. Regeneration occurs but once in a man's life; conversion may occur just as often as he may choose to correct his habits or to reform his life. This conversion or reformation is sometimes so clearly manifest and so thoroughly wrought that it is easily and too often mistaken for regeneration to the fearful deception and loss of him or her thus deceived. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit through belief of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Conversion is the work of man through strength of the will bringing the whole body in complete subjection thereto. The one affects both the spiritual and physical life, and has reference to time and eternity. The other pertains only to this life, and affects only the moral standing. The definitions of the words in their primary significations are totally unlike, and Inspiration itself makes this difference perfectly clear. In Acts, 3: 19, the Apostle Peter says: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." How fearful then to mistake the one for the other, or to so confound the two as to draw no distinction between them when interests of everlasting importance and awakenings of unchanging doom depend upon the just conception and right understanding of this wonderful doctrine of the Word of God.

Like faith, it is known by the fruit it bears in every-day life. Its nature of course is spiritual and can be seen only in its effects, not in itself. It is personal and individual; and in no case can be inherited or transmitted from parent to child, or even be divided or shared with the dearest of friends. Though spiritual it makes constant use of every faculty of the soul, every intelligence of the mind, every power of the body, and every possession of life. The reason, understanding, and nature of man are by no means taken away or substituted; but they are so acted upon by grace divine as to be corrected, enlightened and purified,

so that, turned into another channel, they may be used for God's glory in imitation of the example of Christ Jesus. The soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is resurrected to a life of holiness. It was the same body of our Saviour that came from the tomb, but with a glorious brightness conferred on its humanity that it did not before manifest; so in regeneration. "As a carver takes not away the knobs and grain in the wood, but planes and smoothes it, and carves the image of a man upon it, so God pares away the rugged pieces in man's understanding and will, and engraves His own image upon it." The passions, appetites and affections remain the same, but the difference is readily apparent in the digested objects upon which they are lavished; for instance, the act of loving in a regenerated man is the same as that in the unregenerate, but the love of the latter is entirely earthly, given to self, while the love of the former is heavenly, given to God. So it is with all other feelings or powers in themselves considered. It is the same mind, the same will, the same faculties of every kind, but cleansed, controlled, and used for a religious purpose. If a man be of a quick and violent temper, grace does not remove the quickness and violence, but turns them into zeal with which to serve his God; or if a man be of a thoughtful, serious turn, his thoughtfulness and seriousness are turned into delightful and instructive meditation upon God's holy word. God takes the unregenerate man as he is in all the filth and corruption of his fallen nature, and refines his soul, purifies his affections, ennobles his acts and assimilates his character to that of the Son of God Himself.

It is also a revolutionary change, bringing man into daily conflict with every preconceived idea of duty, pleasure, work, affection, and even of life itself. The fearful struggle inaugurated at the New Birth as the soul cries out for deliverance from sin is but the heavenly signal, indicating that the battle is begun which can end only in the death of soul and body to every emotion, desire, and act of sin.

Its realization is not always the same, hence many are led to fear and doubt their regeneration because it was not like some other, or was different from what was expected. Sometimes it is like the lightning flash athwart some dark cloud, filling the soul with instantaneous light, but as the lightning, it leaves the glorious light of life shining brighter and brighter unto perfect day. Sometimes its ingress is so gradual as scarcely to be perceived until a rich flood of glory all divine dawns upon the astonished soul; nor can it be told when, how, or whence it came. It can only be said, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." The outward manifestations are of necessity slow and unsatisfactory to man because of the corruption of the body, which death shall consign to the bosom of mother earth, who, kinder than loved ones, lovingly receives and retains it until absorbing all its impurities to be burned up with herself at the last day, she presents the purified dust ready for God's resurrection power by which soul and body, pure and undefiled, shall be presented before the Father's throne on high.

It is a radical change: tongues, long used to nought but blasphemy against God, are now tuned, sweetly tuned to His praises; hearts long closed to all the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit are now thrown open wide to His continual indwelling; hands, long untutored save to the service of self, now find their chief delight in the service of God; and lives, entirely given over to indulgence in all the pleasures of sin, are now made happy by sacrifices and self-denials for the glory of His name who died to redeem them from everlasting despair. And shall I not know it? Can the beautiful panorama of God in nature pass before the newly restored sight of man and he not know it? Can the dead faculties of the soul be raised to life, everlasting life, and man be ignorant of the wonderful change? No. No. No. God means for His creatures to know, to feel, to enjoy, to a greater or less degree, this wonderful love so richly bestowed upon them, and to show to a dying world some of the attractions and glory of the transforming power of the Son of God in saving lost souls.

Nothing in man is the germ from which this springs; no recuperated powers of a worn-out force or energy can produce wonders so divine. It is the gift of God. The same voice that said "Let there be light," spoke to the darkness of the troubled soul, and immediately there was light, the light of life. The same power and love that makes and sustains all of natural life, is the power of love that shapes, fosters, and uses these restored faculties and powers to the glory of His own name in the good of man. God's Word, in this, as in all other of its teachings, is so plain that none need make any mistake. John 3: 3-5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit he can not enter into the kingdom of God," thus showing it to be absolutely necessary to entrance into the kingdom of God. John 1: 13: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Ezekiel 36: 27: "And I will put my spirit within you," &c. Ephesians 2: 1: "And you hath He quickened who were dead in

trespasses and sins." John 1: 12: "But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God to them that believe on His name." God does the work with the co-operation of man. John 3: 6-7: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

The following are some of the evidences of the New Birth: 1 John 4: 7: "And every one that loveth is born of God." 1 John 5: 1-4: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our saith."

V. D. M.

Ponder Well this Lesson.

Dear Recorder:—In these days of man-reverence, mammon-worship and hankering after position, we deem it very apposite to direct the attention of the clergy, and of the laity as well, to the very important lesson taught in Matthew 4: 1-11.

When Satan—the tempter—first came to Jesus, how beautifully and successfully He parried his blow! Step by step he made his onslaught; but of no avail as yet. Finally—as if reaching the climax of his temptation—"he taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

But Jesus—nothing daunted—with a fixedness of purpose, and in the steadfastness of His character replies: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

What is the sequel to this contention with a bold, daring temptation? We are plainly told—and what solace and joy it brings to the sorely tempted! Here it is: "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."

The important lesson here taught seems to be, that they, who can rise above the unholy influences of man, mammon and position, need have no fear—because angels will come and minister unto them.

Would that Christian men and women everywhere would ponder and ponder well this lesson. Fraternally, F.

The Lord's Prayer--Temptation.

"And bring us not into temptation." Our Lord knew by experience both the suffering and the danger of temptation. "He suffered, being tempted." "He was in all points tempted like as we are." He passed through all his varied temptations without sin, but he carried with him, and carries still, the memory of the fierce conflicts, and he knew that his people, so long as they remain in this world will be exposed to temptations, which may prove too strong for them. Hence this petition.

"Bring us not into temptation." What is the meaning! Can it be thought, as a thing possible, that our Father in heaven will lead his children into temptation! In one sense, "No," emphatically, no. He never exerts on any man an influence designed to induce him to sin. In this sense, God tempteth no man. Let no man say when he is thus tempted and falls, that God tempted him in order that he might fall. But on the other hand, God does bring us all into temptation by bringing us into this world. There are temptations which are "common to man," and which no person in this world can wholly avoid. In sickness and in health, in solitude and in company, in leisure or in business, in prosperity or in adversity, we are surrounded by objects which furnish the occasions of sin, and solicit us to sin. In every Eden there is a tempting tree bearing forbidden fruit. This is a world of trial and discipline, which it could not be, if there were no temptations in it! Some degree of temptation, too, is good for us. All the temptation which is resisted and overcome helps to develop and strengthen our virtue. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience." manifold temptations, then, should bring you joy, for they prove your piety, and help to complete your character. Welcome them when they meet you in the course of Providence, overcome them, and thank God for them, and for the grace which enabled you to triumph over them.

What then is the meaning of the petition! There are fierce temptations, which distress us, which are too strong for us, which endanger our souls, and from which there seems no way of escape. We are taught to pray that we may not be brought into situations so distressing and so perilous. This is one class of temptations. The apostle speaks of "the fiery darts of the wicked one." They burn, they torture, they often slay. There is another class of temptations, so seductive, that they act on the spiritual system like a slow, but deadly poison, or rather like that deceptive disease, which wastes the vital energies, while the hectic flush, mistaken for the rosy hue of health, is on the cheek, and the eyes are bright as if the soul looked out joyous from the house in which it loved and meant long to dwell. We pray in this petition that we may be kept from influences so insidious and so deadly. We also pray that in every

temptation which God permits to assail us, he will grant us strength to overcome. The promise, which answers to this petition, and explains it, is, "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make also the way of escape that ye may be able to endure it."

Such is the petition. We can see abundant reasons for offering it.

1. The power of temptation. All history and experience bear witness to its power. Among all the generations of our race there has been but one person, the man Christ Jesus, who has not sometime, many times in his life, succumbed to it. Strong men, heroes in the faith, like Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Elijah, and Peter, have fallen before it, and though they have risen again, yet they have borne still the scars and the disgrace of their fall. Consider.

2. The consequences of yielding to temptation. No one can foretell or foresee them all, as they reach on into the eternal future. How often has a young man been ruined for this world and the next by one false step. He thus started on the slippery, down-hill path to perdition, and dragged others down with him. All the sin and the misery which are or ever will be in this world, or in any other, are the result of yielding to temptation. It is not indeed certain that the man who falls to day is forever fallen; through the grace of God he may rise, and be saved, but it is a terrible experiment which he is trying, and even if he should reach heaven at last, others who have witnessed and felt the influence of his fall, may be lost beyond recovery.

3. God's willingness and power to help the tempted. Temptation is strong, but God is stronger. You need an almighty Helper, and you have one, always at hand, always mighty to save. The weakest child, with God to help him, is stronger than all the combined temptations which the world, and the flesh, and the devil can bring against him. Pray for God's help, and he will give it, and you will be safe, but never safe without his help, and you have no reason to expect that help unless you ask for it.

Consider again what the sacred writer says of our Saviour. "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able also to succor them that are tempted." "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."

If we offer this petition sincerely, we shall be careful to avoid scenes of temptation, into which Providence and duty do not call us. There are temptations which we cannot avoid. They lie in the path of duty. These we must not try to avoid but overcome. But there are others to which many expose themselves in the pursuit of worldly pleasure or profit; and when they do this they tempt God, and forfeit the protection for which they pray, when they say "lead us not into temptation." An old legend tells us that a damsel was to be possessed of the devil, and when the bishop commanded the unclean spirit to come out of her, he replied, "I will not, she is my lawful prize, I found her in my own territory, not in the church, but in the theater."

"Watch and pray," says our Lord, "that ye enter not into temptation." Watch as well as pray. We are passing through the country of enemies from whom we are trying to escape. How watchful is a man who is thus fleeing! How carefully does he scan every object he passes and every person he meets, lest he fall into the hands of his foes. So long as he remains in that country his eyes are open, looking before him and on every side. So must the Christian watch.

"Lead us not into temptation." All our brethren who are in the world are in peril like ourselves. Some of them perhaps in much more peril than we. Let us bear them on our hearts, those whose homes are places of fierce temptation which they cannot escape, those who in the business which they must pursue are surrounded by companions who try to entice, or to laugh, or to frighten into sin, those who are endeavoring to break the power of evil habits long indulged. How careful, too, must we be not to lead others into temptation by our conduct or our words. Our thoughtless indulgence, our rash or careless words may start downwards towards the abyss of evil some of those whom our prayer pledges us to guard, so far as we can, against temptation.

One thought more. Possibly the disappointments of our life are the answer to our daily petition. "Lead us not into temptation." If our plans had succeeded, we might have been puffed up with the pride which goeth before destruction, or entangled beyond escape in the net of worldliness, or led upon enchanted ground, when we should have slept the sleep of death. We were praying for disappointment when we said, "Lead us not into temptation," and God in mercy answered our prayer.—*Christian Secretary.*

A Christian may enjoy a calm and inward peace, while he sustains the storms of outward trouble. If he enjoys the former he may expect the latter; if he suffers the latter he may expect the former. There is no spring without its fall; no summer without its winter.—*Secker.*