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Short Sketches of Some of the Baptist Pioneers of Eastern Carolina--No. 3.

John Asplund--Morgan Edwards.

Benedict says of the North Carolina Baptists "they have had, especially in the low countries, in the bounds of the Kehukee and Neuse Associations and their branches, many very able and respectable ministers and brethren, who have, in addition to their religious functions, honorably filled many public stations, as magistrates, legislators, &c. But, as their biographies have been much neglected, little can be said about them."

Morgan Edwards informs us that there were Baptists in this State as far back as 1695. Probably Baptists were here even at an earlier date than that; but who can tell who they were or whence they came?

The truth is, while no State can boast of nobler, more patriotic, or more consecrated men than the Baptist ministers and laymen of North Carolina, who, during the eighteenth century, helped to lay the foundations of our present social and political blessings and our wonderful denominational growth and prosperity; yet their names and deeds have been left either to perish, or to be recorded by the hand of strangers, who, like Edwards and Benedict, have gathered, while passing through the State, such information as was in easy reach of them. Consequently, much of what has been accomplished has never been told, and much has been accredited to those to whom it does not of right belong.

Of many of the men named in these sketches, but little can be said, for the simple reason that but little is known of them. Among these is the name of

JOHN ASPLUND,

to whom belongs a place in these sketches, because, although of foreign birth, he was born again in North Carolina. According to John Island, Asplund was born in Sweden, entered the British naval service, and during the Revolutionary war deserted off the American coast, making his way into this State.

About 1782 he made a profession of religion, and was baptized by David Walsh. He is said to have been a minister of only ordinary gifts. It was as a statistician that he rendered his greatest service to the Baptists of North Carolina and of the whole country. In 1791 appeared his first Register, which was followed by a second in 1794.

Asplund was a great pedestrian. In getting up the material for his Register, he travelled about seventeen thousand miles mostly on foot, and became personally acquainted with seven hundred Baptist preachers.

His first Register shows that in 1790, or just one hundred years ago, there were in North Carolina 94 Baptist churches, 162 preachers (ordained and licensed), and 7,743 members. Now our membership is more than 280,000—a gain of over 3,000 per cent.

This indefatigable worker was accidentally drowned in Fishing Creek, Maryland, in the year 1807.

"The Baptist churches of America," says Benedict, "have reason to respect the memory of this diligent inquirer into their number, origin, character," &c.

Here, I feel sure, is the place to make a few statements about another statistician, because of the valuable service he has rendered to the Baptists of North Carolina. I mean

MORGAN EDWARDS,

who came to this State early in 1772, where he remained about two years, visiting, preaching, gathering information about the denomination, and stimulating the brethren to greater zeal for the Master. After his return home, he wrote a "History of the North Carolina Baptists." The manuscript is now in possession of H. G. Jones of Philadelphia.

Morgan Edwards was born in Wales, May 9th, 1731, old style, entered the ministry in his sixteenth year, and was ordained June 1, 1757. He arrived in the United States with recommendations from Dr. Gill and other ministers of London, May 28, 1761, and soon afterwards became pastor of the First Baptist church in Philadelphia. In the year 1772 he settled upon a plantation in Delaware. It was about this date that he visited various churches in this State and South Carolina, assisting, while among us, in the organization of some churches and ordination of some men to the gospel ministry. He died in the State of Delaware, 8th of January, 1795, in the 73d year of his age, and was buried in the

aisle of the First Baptist church, Philadelphia.

Besides his history of the North Carolina Baptists, he also wrote a history of the South Carolina Baptists, forty two volumes of sermons, and other works, some of which were printed, which show that he was a hard-working laborer in the Lord's vineyard. Besides his ministerial and literary work, he did a vast deal of travelling in England, Ireland and the United States.

JOHN T. ALBRITTON.

Mt. Olive, N. C.

Preaching.

My Dear Bro. Bailey:—Your comment in this week's RECORDER on a recent utterance of mine is likely to make a wrong impression of what was said. And you will let me take the opportunity to commend, in a word, to the serious consideration of Christian people what has of late taken the shape in my mind of a profound conviction. Of course, your comment was made with what is now called preaching in your mind. To preaching, as it is now almost exclusively exercised, I question if a parallel can be found in the New Testament. The Apostles knew little and cared less about meeting-houses. In their time the preacher was a shepherd, a carpenter, a fisherman, who knew the Good News, and who, as a friend, told it to his neighbor who did not know it. They were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word. Peter said to the whole body of Christians, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, to declare abroad the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. 2: 9.) That has been a false, an unchristian development by which the simple overseer of Paul's appointment has come to monopolize the business of telling the Good News. It is reversion of the old Jewish regime when the priest absorbed in himself well nigh all the offices related to the religious life of the people. It has come to pass that thousands of professing Christians are mere parasites, maintaining no independent relation to Christ and no personal religious activity. There is no more imperative demand before the Christian world of day than that which requires a return to the Apostolic method under which all believers were preachers. The woman of Samaria (pray permit the reference) was not solemnly appointed by Jesus to "preach" and to "teach"; but it was not long after she discovered him to be a prophet when her whole city was streaming down the valley to see and hear him.

A vessel came into New York harbor and cast anchor. Soon a boat was lowered and messengers were dispatched with news from across the ocean. On coming within hearing of the eager multitude on the wharves, the messengers shouted "Peace, peace!"—the peace of 1812; and within two hours, every man, woman and child in New York, and soon throughout the country knew the joyful tidings. It is nearly two thousand years since the angels said to the shepherds "Peace on earth, good will to men," and yet there are millions who do not know it. The shepherds did their duty—we read "All men did marvel at the things which were told them by the shepherds"—but modern Christendom has gone to sleep in the delightful consciousness of delegated responsibility. Attention is directed to the support of an institution "Our church," "Our minister." Mean while, souls are languishing at our side, whom said institution will never reach. "Christ came to earth himself. He did not send his check." The world wait on his followers—wails to see him follow his example.

There are signs in many quarters of a revival of the sense of individual responsibility on the part of Christians. God speed the day when every believer shall be eager to tell his neighbors and friends how great things the Lord hath done for his soul.

Fraternally, ED. M. POTRAT.
New Haven, Conn., Jan. 29, 1890.

No Ministerial Aid.

Rev. C. O. Brown, of Sumter, S. C., is writing in the Baptist Courier some advice to young theological students, and among other things, has the following:

And one of these days, after some big meeting, you are going to write a letter to the paper, and tell of that meeting. O, it was a wonderful meeting! None like it since the days of Ezra, and the people flocked to the church; the deacons had to put chairs in the aisles, the house was full twenty minutes before the preacher got there, so anxious were they to hear him. On the first Sunday you stirred the waters by baptizing eleven, on the next Sunday, forty six; and after all your saying is said, you will wind up with this bright and cherished utterance—an utterance devised for preachers only—"I had no ministerial aid." Now, young one, have you sized up those words? Do they remind you of anything? Did you ever read a tender and touching poem that tells of Jacky Horner, and with "what a smart boy am I!" Now that is the clear meaning of "I had no ministerial aid." It is pure and sheer self glorification. It says, substantially, "Am I not a big one! I did all this work myself. Not a single fellow stuck in his bill anywhere." Now the point is—*hanc fabula docet*—don't say, under any circumstances, "I had no ministerial aid." Send me a letter promising not to say it, will you!

The Fire that Kindles Revivals.

The baptism which Christ brought to his infant church was a "baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire." The flame typifies the warming, purifying, and life giving influence on human hearts. When the Holy Spirit descended upon the assembled company on the day of Pentecost, there was a visible appearance as of cloven tongues of flame playing over every brow. Wherever there is a heart or a church that is filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, there is a glow of zeal and heavenly love. The lack of these makes a "cold church"; and what ought to be a heat-imparting furnace to the community becomes an ecclesiastical ice-house. The warming up of a cold church is what is commonly known as a revival.

Certain artificial methods are sometimes resorted to, which kindle a blaze like a burning tar-barrel; but such spasmodic excitements are apt to end in smoke, and too often in disastrous results upon some souls that are charred into aversion and disgust. A true revival is kindled by the Holy Spirit. But the agents employed are human agents, and the measures employed are similar to those of the early apostles—viz., preaching, praying, and personal efforts to win souls to Christ. That king of American evangelists, Charles G. Finney (afterward president of Oberlin College), used to begin with striving to awaken cold and benumbed Christians before he tried to arouse the impenitent. His sermons were often chain lightning; they burned into the very core of human hearts, and the glory of Finney's work was that it resulted generally in converted characters and lives. He strove not only to melt human hearts, but, by the divine power imparted through the truth, to mold them into some resemblance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the noblest men and women who led in Christian enterprises and moral reforms were the shining products of Finney's red-hot ministry. The religion he preached was not of the sentimental and sensational sort which luxuriates in the fervors of prayer-meetings and hymn singings, but has no brawn to stand the rough weather of every-day life. Of that sort there is quite enough and too much. The only revival worth striving for in any congregation or community is a revival of the religion which speaks the truth and keeps its promises, which is as good during the week as on the Sabbath, which sweetens the home and purifies the politics from roguery and rottenness, which puts a Bible conscience into every-day life, and which consecrates to the Lord Jesus Christ the "first fruits" of heart and brain, and time and purse and influence. As Prof. Drummond well remarks, it is not a large quantity, but a better quality, of religious character that is most needed.

Revivals commonly have small beginnings. Often the seed of fire is in a single godly heart that is filled and inspired with the love of Jesus. The Pentecostal work began with a prayer meeting in an obscure upper room in Jerusalem. If there had been a daily paper in that city at that time, it would not have noticed the little coterie of "fanatics" who met to honor the memory of the crucified Nazarene. But the fire kindled in that sacred chamber soon burst forth over the civilized world. After eighteen centuries it is burning yet. The seed of the fire which kindled the Reformation was in Luther's big Saxon heart. In our times we have seen equally humble beginnings of revivals which have spread through a whole church, and sometimes from church to church through a whole city. Two young ladies came home from visiting a place in which they had been converted to Christ. They brought the live coals in their hearts, began at once to converse with their unconverted friends, and a work of grace was kindled which spread through the church to which they belonged. Nearly all the revivals which I have witnessed in the churches under my charge have commenced in one or two individual hearts. The first one began with the faithful talk of a sweet young girl to an impenitent friend. In 1872 Mr. Moody (not yet famous) instituted a series of prayer-meetings and Bible readings in our new mission chapel; but a couple of dozen persons attended them. "This seems slow work," I said to him. "Very true," replied the sagacious brother, "it is slow, but if you want to kindle a fire, you collect a handful of sticks, light them with a match and keep blowing until they blaze, then heap on the wood. So I am working here with a handful of Christians, endeavoring to get them to consecrate themselves fully to Jesus, and if they get well warmed with divine, a general revival will come and sinners will be reached and brought in." He was right, and his sagacious efforts were followed by a deep and effective work of grace that changed many hearts and lives. Let us never despise the day of small things.

Everything depends upon the kind of fire that is used. Sincere fervent Christ love shed abroad in even one heart, and accompanied by the Holy Spirit, is a seed of heavenly flame, then the power is from on high. A louder match of mere human effort may start a bonfire of pine-stavings; but, as in the case of Elijah at Mount Horeb, "The Lord is not in the fire." Everything like reliance upon any man or measure is fatal. Co-operation with the Holy Spirit is the one secret of sure success. Religious machinery is always useless unless the "living spirit is within the wheels." That divine Spirit works upon and works with the humblest private Christian as

with the most eloquent preacher or the most celebrated evangelist. Don't send for a man; send first for the Master. When Christ comes, the dead are raised to life. God answers honest prayer, and God always blesses honest, unselfish work. This is a truism that is too often forgotten.

Amid all modern inventions there has never been any improvement on the methods used in Apostolic times. The "Book of the Acts" is chiefly the record of individual labor (fired with the love of Christ) for and with individual souls. Philip finds his man. Paul finds his man or woman, and then the work spreads in Samaria, Lystra, Philippi or elsewhere. Christ's best work was personal. The danger in our churches is in using phosphorus instead of celestial fire. Another danger is that individual responsibility will be lost sight of, and each church-member will neglect his own duty to souls while waiting for the rest to move. One earnest soul (in a pulpit or out of it) that is emptied of self and saturated with Christ may kindle the souls next and nearest to him. The spiritual flame thus spreads, and a frigid church may soon reddened into a strong anthracite glow. Perhaps some brother or sister who reads this article may drop the paper and inquire: "Lord, is it I?" Yes, my friend, it is you, if you will seek a fresh baptism of the power from on high, and then carry your live coal of love to some one who is freezing to death. A single lamp well used is worth more than a torchlight procession on idle parade.—*Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, in Zion's Advocate.*

Make Full Proof of thy Ministry.

These words contain Paul's solemn and impressive charge to Timothy, his son in the ministry, who lay very near his heart. He remembered him in his prayers night and day, called to remembrance the unforgotten faith that dwelt in him which first dwelt in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Wherefore says he: "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee."

There always has been on the part of true and faithful aged ministers a feeling of deep interest in behalf of young men entering the work of the ministry. God has put great honor upon this, the highest and most noble employment; hence the great importance of being qualified for so sacred an office. There is great danger in these days of scholastic attainments and abstract speculation of the Christian ministry being imposed upon. Human learning is important and also a bright intellect, but these alone are not sufficient; more satisfactory testimonials are demanded: Make full proof of thy ministry. How are we to do it.

First, by giving unmistakable evidence that we have been called of God, and put into the ministry by him. The outward separation by ordination is man's work and supposes the previous appointment of God. The Holy Ghost separated Paul and Barnabas unto the work to which they had been called, Acts 13: 2. Our sufficiency is of God who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament (2 Cor. 3: 5, 6). Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it, (Col. 4: 17). There are many other proofs given, showing beyond doubt that he whom the Lord would have preach the gospel is called and put into the ministry by him. He who has not been the well tried friend of God and has not been inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take this sacred office, and whose heart has not been filled with the compassionate love of Jesus, is not worthy of a place in his ministry.

While we do not contend that an audible voice is heard calling us to labor as ambassadors for Christ, we do insist that necessity is laid upon every one whom he counsels worthy, so that he feels intensely from the very depths of his soul: Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel of Christ.

We should make full proof of our ministry by preaching the truth God bids us. When Jonah was sent to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh, the command was strictly given, "Go preach the preaching I bid thee."

We are not to proclaim creeds and doctrines instituted and taught by men, nor proclaim a cherished belief, as the result merely of our long investigations or our extraordinary experience, but upon a "thus saith the Lord." So spake the hoary-headed Joshua, when a prophet came forth in Gideon's days and spake to rebellious Israel: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel." If we turn to the sacred pages of Isaiah and Jeremiah we cannot fail to notice how often they quote the divine authority. Our line of duty is clearly prescribed, and we have no right to go beyond it. When a tabernacle was to be built the command as given to Moses was, "See thou make all things after the pattern showed thee in the mount." Christ, in giving the great commission, said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Paul earnestly advises Timothy to preach the word, and in addressing his Ephesian brethren tells them to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It is a fearful thing beyond expression to preach any doctrine or teach observance of any ordinance that cannot be sustained by the word of God. "To the law and the testi-

mony" if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. There are some who would pervert the gospel: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1: 8.

We should make full proof of our ministry by a devoted exemplary life. No brightness of talent, no superiority of intellect, no extent of knowledge, no display of oratory, will prove a substitute for these essential qualifications. A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, (1 Tim. 3: 2, 7.) When the rulers of the people and elders of Israel saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled and took knowledge (of them) that they have been with Jesus. The meekness, wisdom and firmness of these holy men were a strong confirmation of the Christian faith.

It is recorded of Barnabas that he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and as the result much people was added unto the Lord, a noble testimony; a sacred influence, extending through all time.

Very much depends upon the example of the minister in his walk among the people of his charge. On a certain occasion, as Elisha passed to Shunam, a great woman said to her husband, "Now I perceive that this is a holy man of God." How important in all our journeyings we have an impression that we are God's ministers; and like Jacob, declare that we have power with God and men.—*Rev. W. R. Northrop in Christian Herald.*

The Crown of Thorns.

I submit the following as the probable interpretation of the fact that our Savior was crowned with thorns:

In wearing the thorns the Savior was set forth as bearing the curse. One of the marks of the curse was that the "earth should bring forth thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3: 18), and the Apostle in Gal. 3: 13, says: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." The thorns were witnesses of the curse of God resting upon the earth, and put upon the Redeemer's head; they symbolized that the curse was borne by him. It will be remembered that although the purple robe was taken off the Savior, the crown was not. He died with that upon his brow; typifying that in his death he lifted the curse even from the earth. In this we have the prophecy that the earth is to be delivered from the curse, and Eden's bowers shall bloom again, and the rose without a thorn shall brighten the hills and valleys of earth.—*A. E. Owen in Central Baptist.*

"The modern creedless Baptist is a production of the age of shame. He has no predecessor. May he have no successor."—*Spurgeon.*

We do not think he will have any successor. Those who follow him will throw off the name of Baptist and be agnostics, or whatever the infidels of to-morrow may call themselves. The man who discards the doctrine of Christianity but holds to the graces, if he have been trained under the influence of those doctrines in youth, may maintain to a certain extent those graces still. His life is not changed by his new intellectual attitude. But his successor who attempts to maintain the graces without the doctrines on which they rest, will end in blank unbelief. Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, was a "liberal" in his day, and as a result his son, Matthew Arnold, was almost an atheist. Christian graces cannot long flourish where Christian doctrines are not believed. It will not do to say, "No matter what a man believes, so his heart is right."

As well say—"No matter what a man does, so his heart is right." True, God looks at the heart, but he also looks at the head and at the hand. Head and heart and hand cannot be separated. God has joined them together—let no man seek to put them asunder.—*Western Recorder.*

There is nowhere in the world, from the political side of the arena, so great a distrust of the papacy as in Italy. And what nation among the nations is so well informed upon the spirit and workings of the papacy as the Italian nation! If they who abide in his own house, the very members of his family, may not trust him who arbitrarily rules from the Vatican, then who should venture to repose confidence in him! Italy may have many foes among the nations, but the side of her life which she most securely fortifies is that resting against the Vatican. Here is the one foe which she fears more than all other foes and against whose stealthy advances she most stoutly protests. An unmistakable voice was heard in the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, December 19, 1889, when they passed a bill "depriving the clergy of the direction of all charities" by a vote of 185 to 95. The charities of the nation are henceforth to be administered by the civil hand, whose voice is as warm and far less selfish than that of the papal ecclesiastical. Roman rule of "persecution" is met by Italy's rule of "impartial justice." All honor to the Italian state.—*Knox.*