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Short Sketches of Some of the Baptist Pioneers of Eastern Carolina—No. 4.

John Gano.

During the decade of 1750-'60, the Baptists of North Carolina were brought up to more orthodox views and better discipline through the labors of such ministers as Benjamin Miller, Peter Vanborn, William Wallis, the sley-maker, Robert Williams, who was born in Northampton county, N. C., in the year 1717, and ordained to the pastorate of Welsh Neck church, S. C., in 1753, and one other minister, some account of whom will be given in the present paper, on account of his intrinsic worth and the valuable service he rendered to the denomination in this State. This last-named minister was none other than the distinguished

JOHN GANO,

who came to North Carolina in the summer of 1754, under appointment of the Philadelphia Association, and again about 1755, under appointment of the Charleston Association, which, from about that date to the year 1765, had in her membership several churches in this State. Gano found a fine field for his eloquence, fortitude and pious labors. Many professed religion under his ministry, and his efforts at reformation of the churches were crowned with remarkable success. The Charleston Association tendered him a vote of thanks for his faithfulness and industry.

The work of reformation progressed to such a degree, under the labors of Gano, together with those of Miller, Vanhorne and others, that before the year 1765, about all the ministers of the State, except Joseph and William Parker, and a Mr. Winfield, and all the churches except those under their care (two or three), had embraced the principles of the reformation, or, in other words, the doctrines of grace as held by the Regular Baptists of to-day.

He organized a church in the Jersey settlement, Rowan county, in the year 1758, which he served about two years, or until it was broken up by the incursions of the Indians.

I had the good fortune, not long since, to find in the house of Joseph Cavanaugh of Duplin county a copy of John Gano's biography, written by his son, Stephen Gano. From this old work and other sources, I glean the following facts:

John Gano was born at Hopewell, New Jersey, July 23, 1727. His father, Stephen Gano, was a Presbyterian, but his mother was a Baptist, and his maternal grandmother, who reached the age of ninety-six, was a member of the Baptist church about seventy-six years.

He desired to unite with his father's church; but having some scruples about infant baptism, he sought to have them removed by conversation with some Pedobaptist ministers, and especially with one of the distinguished Tennants. Their arguments had the same effect upon Gano that Dr. Watts' sermon in favor of pedobaptism had upon Nicholas Bidgood—they made him a Baptist. He was ordained May, 1754, and immediately entered upon evangelistic work in North and South Carolina. He was pastor in Philadelphia and New York several years, and chaplain in the army during most of the Revolutionary war. In 1787 he went to Kentucky and died at Frankfort in that State, in the year 1804, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He was twice married, having selected the widow of Capt. Thos. Bryant of North Carolina, for his second wife.

This wonderful man, of whom Benedict said "as an itinerant he was inferior to none who ever travelled the United States, unless it was the renowned Whitfield," was as much noted for his carelessness about dates and places, as for the sprightliness of his wit. Therefore, while we read in his journal of the many interesting incidents connected with his labor and travels, we are often made to wish that he had given more attention to dates and localities.

His leading characteristics were his fearlessness, his great adroitness in administering reproofs, and in adapting his texts to his surroundings, his exuberance of wit and humor, and his pious zeal in promoting the kingdom of his Redeemer.

His fearlessness never seemed to fall him but once, and then only temporarily. It was during his first visit to Charleston. He preached in the Baptist church, confronted by twelve ministers, among whom was the celebrated George Whitfield. He says of that occasion: "When I arose to speak, the sight of so brilliant an audience, among whom were twelve ministers, and one of whom was Mr. Whitfield, for a moment brought the fear of man upon me; but, blessed be the Lord, I was soon relieved

from this embarrassment; the thought passed my mind, I had none to fear or obey but the Lord."

According to Morgan Edwards' account of Gano's first visit to Eastern North Carolina, the brethren, instead of meeting him as he desired, avoided him, and appointed a meeting among themselves for consultation. Gano, having heard of the meeting, went to it, ascended the pulpit, and took for his text the words: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Some were afraid, some were ashamed of their shyness, and many were convinced of their errors touching faith and conversion. One minister, full of self assurance, went to see and hear the stranger, boasting that he would return triumphant. Being asked, on his return, how he came off, he replied, "The Lord have mercy upon you, for this Northern minister has put a *mens telet* upon me!"

On his return from Charleston, he determined to preach at a place somewhere on Tar river (when or where he does not tell us), but was advised not to attempt it, as he had been adjudged to be a French spy on account of his name. He persisted, however, and had an appointment published, which brought together a large crowd, among whom were a Colonel and his regiment, it being muster day. He approached the Colonel, who had threatened to apprehend him as a spy, and informed him that, while he was loyal to King George, he was yet more loyal to King Immanuel, and desired to preach to his soldiers. The Colonel readily consenting, Gano mounted the stage erected for him, and preached on the Christian's armor. The officer, instead of arresting him, invited him to preach again after a short drill. This ended his threatened chastisement and the fears of his friends.

I will give but one or two specimens of his way of reproof:

Having given great offence once to a couple of young men, while he was preaching in a very wicked community, the young men dared him to fight. He asked that the fighting be postponed awhile, as he had to preach again in a short time. They consented. At the close of the second discourse, they presented themselves for the fight. He told them that if he had to fight them, he preferred to do it in a more retired place, and not before the great crowd of people. He started for the retired place, the young men following close behind. Then he began, "Young men, you ought to be ashamed of your conduct. I am an entire stranger here, and know not the names or characters of any. You have proved by your conduct that you are guilty of the vices I have censured; and if you feel so much disturbed at my reproofs, how will you stand before the bar of God?" "I beg your pardon," said one. "I beg your pardon," said the other. "I am sorry." "If you are beat, gentlemen," said Gano, "we will go back."

While in the army he was on his way to the place where he was to pray with the regiment, and passed by a group of officers, one of whom was swearing rapidly. "Good morning, doctor," said they. "Good morning," said he; and then, turning to the swearing officer, he continued, "You pray early this morning." "I beg your pardon, sir," said the officer. "O, I cannot pardon you; carry your case to your God."

One or two specimens of his adroitness in adapting texts of Scripture to circumstances, must suffice.

On his removal to Kentucky, he lost some of his valuables by the overturning of one of the boats. After landing in his adopted State, he preached from the words, "So they all got safe to land."

While in the army he was informed on Saturday that the troops would march on the following Monday, but that he must say nothing about it till after the sermon on Sunday. On Sunday, therefore, Gano preached from the text, "Being ready to depart on the morrow." After the sermon, the orders were given.

His son, Stephen Gano, visited him after he went to Kentucky. The first sermon the father preached after the visit was from the words, "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas."

A short extract from the glowing eulogy pronounced by Dr. Richard Furman must close this article:

"The late Rev. John Gano will be long remembered with affection and respect in the United States of America. Here was his character formed, and here, as on a conspicuous theatre, were the actions of his amiable, pious and useful life exhibited. * * * As a minister of Christ, he shone like a star of the first magnitude in the American churches, and moved in a widely extended field of action. * * * He lived to a good old age; served his generation according to the will of God, saw his posterity multiplying around him; his country independent, free and happy; the church of Christ, for which he felt and labored, advancing; and thus he closed his eyes in peace; his heart expanding with the sublime hope of immortality and heavenly bliss. * * * Like John, the harbinger of our Redeemer, 'he was a burning and a shining light, and many rejoiced in his light.' Resembling the sun, he arose in the church with morning brightness, advanced regularly to his station of meridian splendor, and then gently declined with mild effulgence, till he disappeared without a cloud to interrupt his rays or obscure his glory."
JNO. T. ALBRIGHT.

Pulpit Simplicity.

[A paper presented by Rev. J. Huntington, Milan, before the Detroit Ministers' Meeting, November 11th, 1889.]

The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. To one who believes and appreciates the true value of the gospel, as a revelation of God to men, there is possibly no single statement, even in inspired literature, more richly and expressively fraught with the real meaning of the mission of Christ to the world, than this. Concise, compact, comprehensive, it contains the fact, the method, and the promise of things to come. So far as the gospel is relatively concerned, even with its manifold phases and aims, it is all present in this one statement as is the many petalled bud in the unfolding calyx of the rose. It is not assumed, of course, that there is no mystery looped about by these extended lines that mark the directions of the advent and of the ascension. Much of Revelation is truth in seed form. But the smallest of seeds may hold the germ of the greatest of herbs. Revealed truth in comprehensive statement is like a child before you. There is bodily presence, also mind. Moral attributes and spiritual life are present before you. You may caress the child. You may know and love it familiarly, but on either side of this little globe, filled with the mystery of life, strike off tangent lines, that go on indefinitely, radiating evermore; and these lines are the borders of what is possible in the life of the child. The gospel as to what it is in itself, or as to its effectiveness, or as to its results, cannot be contained by any measure or boundary. To think it can be bounded, would be like proposing to sweep a circumference around the being and works of God. But the gospel as to what it is in its relation to sinful men, and as to the work it asks of men in its ministrations, is as strangely simple as it is strangely divine. Conformity by Christ to our state in the flesh was as complete as it was godward in the Spirit. We know him in the brotherhood, as the Father knows him in the Sonship. The simplicity of his presence is extended even to the cradle and is made manifest along the path of a life conformed to the experiences incidental to a plain and humble life. No superhuman effort on our part is required to get to Christ, for he is made manifest in the flesh and dwells among us. He has made the perfect connection with men in the flesh, and has simplified whatever requires our concern respecting himself and his work for us, so that accountability fairly obtains, if the offers he makes are not accepted, and the work he appoints is not done. This general thought has its bearing on the methods of the pulpit. The minister of Christ may find his work lying far this side of that which is imaginative and mystical. The disciple who stood nearest to his Lord in intimacy, having told of the incarnation in the beginning of his gospel, suggests most clearly his conception of method in the ministry, in the opening phrases of his epistles: "That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, (for the life was manifested and we have seen it) . . . that declare we unto you." These are his insistent words from which cleave away all possibility of doubt or misunderstanding. The meaning is that the minister is to plainly tell that which has been made plain to him concerning Christ and his work in the flesh. But from the general to the particular, a first step may be

A WORD OF DEFINITION.

This can hardly be necessary, more than to mark a preliminary step. The term simplicity, apart from relative use, it is true, might be shorn of considerable vagueness if laid under the shears of exact definition; but handed up to the pulpit and merged with the dignity and sanctity of that highest of thrones of earthly administration, there is small occasion of explanation. It is thus barred, of course, from sliding downwards towards the drift of foolishness, and is seen in the garb of decorum, and crowned with power. It is true that Paul in one instance makes special choice of the word foolishness as fitting the work of preaching the gospel, but it is an admission formulated by opposition, in the use of which he sees an advantage to be gained. It was from the wisdom of the wise. Paul admits the term as coming from the Corinthian critic, but claims for it the power of God as seen from his own point of view. But, besides the readiness of Paul to allow the gospel he preached to be accounted comparatively as foolishness, there is something in the persistent method by which he taught his doctrine that explains and enforces the idea of pulpit simplicity. His manner of discourse was not involved. He covered nothing. He excused nothing. He made no effort to clothe his doctrine with terms cut after the philosophic patterns so much in fashion about him at Corinth. Nothing could be more absurd to every Corinthian conception than this doctrine of Paul's as finished, applied, and even glorified in the cross of Christ. Yet, rather than recede one iota, the faithful preacher insists, holding that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish, but to the saved it is the power of God, and by this he is able to invert the order of the challenge made to him, and to state that God has made foolish the "wisdom of the world," and has pleased to save them that

would believe by the "foolishness of preaching." He was not after the "wisdom of words," lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Such is the preacher's simplicity—plainness with the truth.

Why, then, is this method urged? First, because it is in the nature of the calling. Ministers who are properly in office are called of God. Even the apostles were subject to authority and direction, and they so understood it. Nothing was subject to them except as they were subject to Christ. We so understand it. No point is more strenuously held by Baptists than that there must be good evidence of a "call" to the work, superseding ambition, sympathy, education—everything, anything that may incline a man to preach. He must be called of God, of which assurance the laying on of hands is but the seal. But the logic of this rule is decisive that the man so called is under bonds to serve. The call and ordination are not to sovereignty in office, but to service—not to command, but to obey. He is to preach "the Word," not his word. He must work to his chart or lose the ship. A pilot is not one who knows the trackless ocean, but one who steers by the chart and compass. The instance of Jonah is in point. He evidently had a call. The folly of disobeying this involved him in a sub-marine experience extraordinary. The waves above him, weeds wrapping about his head, and his expulsion from marine life by a sovereign monster of the deep, brought him to the spirit of simple obedience; and, willing to go now, he is restricted in the matter of his mission. "Preach the preaching that I bid thee," is the limiting injunction.

This idea of the preacher's subordination to the divine calling was dearly apprehended by Paul, the greatest of preachers. Whether in Corinth, at Jerusalem, facing a mob of frenzied Jews, or before Agrippa, invariably, like the recurring tide, he pooped upon the reefs of unbelief about him the doctrine of Jesus and the resurrection. It was the substance of the advent, therefore, of the calling, therefore of the preaching. This is his statement: Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great. Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles, (Acts 26: 23, 24). His impression of his subordinate position as one under Christ is witnessed in his appeal to the churches of Galatia. His call to be an apostle he insists "is not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." The spectacle of their removal to "another gospel" amazes him, and he indignantly replies that there is "not another," and calls anathema upon the man or angel who should preach anything as gospel, that was not in matter like that received of him. To others, than the sincere minister of Christ there would seem to be serious limitation in the apostle's position here, and from such sources come longings for broader fields. It is doubtful if the ark of God, with the old or new covenant contained, taken upon the field of controversy, is not liable to be captured. Stored as it may and ought to be, the mind of the preacher must not be subject to subtlety and to departure from "simplicity"—singleness of mind—that is in Christ. The apostolic doctrine was hardly controverted it was scouted, but it turned the world "upside down." It still is the salt of civilization and the power of God not to be ashamed of. The preaching required is that provided by Christ in matter and in method. An intense dislike grew up in the mind of Gen. Grant towards Gen. Warren, one of his bravest subordinates, hatred that relieved the subordinate general even while the glory of his heroism was gathering new lustre in the struggle at Appomattox, and never died, and this became Warren had a habit of discussing orders and suggesting changes in them. It was a violation of one of the first rules of good soldiery, and the superior could not brook it. Who is he that will be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and will do otherwise than say "the power and the wisdom are thine; service is mine."

Second, Simplicity is in the nature of the work. The preacher's objective point, primarily, is the heart, rather than the head. It is moral, rather than intellectual. Not to divorce these great functionaries in the human constitution, but through one reach the other. With beneficence supreme for both, the true method is by way of the heart to the head. Save a man, then send him to school. Good ground for experiment in this matter of preferred primaries has been amply furnished in this age of missions. The teacher and preacher have been abroad, and the results have forced comparison.

When the great evangelist of Ongole was forced to abandon his stately cherished plan to capture the stronghold of High Caste, so temptingly ripe in the sunlight of the advanced schools of western civilization, from which the way seemed easy to the conquest of the plains of the Sow Caste, it only confirmed and repeated the experience of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. Anxious to first win the Jews, who seemed to them to be richer spoil for the faith, they were expelled by their more intelligent opposition, and waxing bold they said, "It was necessary that the word of

God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life; lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13: 46).

Further back, and by higher authority, comes the endorsement of the scene in Simon's house. Across the table Simon flings the contempt and scorn he feels because Jesus does not repel the lowly woman whose opportunity had brought her to the feet of her Lord. Back flash the divine words of rebuke: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," while in the tears of the loving convert glitter the beams of the morning light of its new life in Christ Jesus. The bearing of this it seems to me is towards the idea that the gospel is for the people. The election of social and intellectual attainment is not in its first intent. The uplifting of the convert is after, rather than before the finding. The lost sheep is to be found before it can be fattened. Remembering that in this day of social and intellectual elevation, incidental to Christian civilization there is many an accomplished mind that needs still the coronation of piety, yet there need be no question as to method in the work to be done for such. Sin wrapped about by accomplishment is sin nevertheless, and is alas! too often all the more sinful because of its environment. Nicodemus needs to be born of God just as much as Mary of Magdala.

David could not scale the walls of the Jebusites, but he could gain the citadel by way of "the gutter." So then the work of the minister, like that of the Master, is first of all humane in kind. It seeks to heal the hurt of the people, and the saving of the thief as an immediate trophy of the cross, is evidence enough, that our Savior makes no fences among the lost sheep, but sweeps the boundary about the utmost borders of the pastures of sin.

CONFORMITY OF METHOD.

Simplicity in the preacher, then, comes at last to be only a matter of essential conformity to the nature of the calling he recognizes, and to the nature of the work given into his hands. He need not fear the loss of dignity, or the loss of power, if in his methods, especially in his language, he gives special attention to plainness. The language we use is only at its best when in its purest Saxon orthography and idiom. There is danger that the preacher may yield to the temptation to follow the style of the essayist and the metaphysician, and become polysyllabic and involved, in order that he may be acceptable to the intellectual. As surely as he yields, he will experience a loss of power at the point where he needs it most. If he has a pure, sweet word for the child, and the illiterate soldier before him, the light and heat of that word will be sure to reach the attention of his most intellectual hearer. If he strikes with a hot iron of truth with the ringing hammer of Saxon simplicity, the better clad minds will be first of all to heed the sparks. Webster was Saxon, with the constitution for its exposition. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe says of Wendell Phillips that "he had the uncommon advantages of grace and elegance of person and manner. The plain, almost homely English which he used in many of his addresses, showed that he chose to speak the language of the people, in order to win for his thought the most entire understanding and the broadest acceptance. He was, however, a man familiar with all that is polite, in literature and out of it." Surely there need be no fear in the use of plain English when we see the honor won by such men. But honored examples like Phillips on the platform and Broadus in the pulpit are only glintings of the method of the Master to whom the common people came, and whose divine words flowed in simplicity also divine. How charming is his pictured preaching. Would he show how the soul went out to wasting and want, there is the picture of the outbound prodigal, and how the soul returns to God. Lo! the prodigal returns. "Goods" gone, want pressing, will subdue, he is soon in the father's home. What is the Christian in the world? "Salt," "light." How are the disciples to gain men to the gospel? Fish for them. Cast the net and gather of every sort. What is the kingdom incipient? A mustard seed, and afterward? The greatest of herbs. What is the Lord's care for his people? The shepherd to the sheep. What his instant and vital relation to them? As the branch to the vine. Hear the divine mandate of forgiveness. "Go in peace and sin no more." Seven words and every one a monosyllable.

Do you see yonder a lad in picnic attire, with a little basket of luncheon on his arm? That boy is Christ's minister to five thousand people. His loaves and fishes are his text, broken into his table, it goes through the Master's hand, and grows to a feast. The preacher's wonderful opportunity, to gain the children to win the manna, lies in his faithful, simple use of the neglected Bible. Let him, like the brightest and richest of gems, gather the bright sunlight of God's gospel to men, and reflect, resolve that light, pure and plain, giving no false coloring to the man born beams.—*Christian Herald.*

When the queen of Madagascar visited the saloons in her kingdom, and the saloon keepers asked her for compensation, she replied: "Compensate those you have wronged, and I will pay the difference."