

The Biblical Recorder.

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STRAY BAPTISTS.

It is a fact that none can deny that quite a number of our Baptist brethren and sisters are living in different communities who have never connected themselves with the churches near them, and hence, have failed to properly identify themselves with the cause in the communities in which their lot is cast. It is quite common for our preachers, and others, to roundly abuse this class of Baptists, and the editor, as a rule, joins in. In this paper we wish to reason kindly with our brethren and sisters who are thus situated, and in this way, if possible, convince them of duty, instead of using abuse in order to drive them to it. We would not have them or others to suppose that we propose to assume the role of apologist for the course they have pursued; nor would we claim that the severe censure to which they are often subjected is unmerited; but still this censure has been going on so long, and there are still so many "stray Baptists" that persist in the course for which they are blamed, that it has occurred to us that, in this paper at least, we should remember that there is much wisdom in the old motto, "Persuasion is better than force."

It would be well, then, in the outset to inquire into the causes that will account for the fact that so many Baptists can be found in different communities who have never called for their church letters; or if they hold them, have never joined the Baptist churches nearest to them.

One very evident cause is *carelessness*. Many of our people, when they prepare to move to other sections of country, will make all necessary secular preparation for the journey and for the change; but they seem utterly oblivious to the fact that they ought to make religious preparation also; and this latter kind of preparation involves that of calling for letters of dismissal *before leaving*. If it be wise for a man to adjust his secular affairs for such a change, where is the wisdom of neglecting his religious affairs? His failure to do so generally indicates that he places more value on the seen than on the unseen.

Another cause is to be found in the fact that, although they are going to other sections, they think that the ties that bind them to the old church are so tender as that they cannot sever them. They thus reason: "This is the church of my mother, father, and relatives; here I professed, and here I was baptized, and owing to the dear associations and memories that bind me to this people and church, I cannot sever the relation, I cannot call for my letter," &c. There is some seeming force in this reasoning, dear brethren, and yet, to be candid, there is a great deal of *weakness* in it. No one blames you for loving the church of your parents and relatives, where you professed and was baptized. It would be strange if you did not, and you should be happy in all the years that follow your leaving your old home when from time to time you are permitted to revisit the scenes that are so dear to you, and to worship again within the walls and under the roof of the dear old building within which God forsooth blessed your own soul; but you ought to remember that in calling for your letter you are not severing spiritual relations between yourself, your old church, and your dear ones. If they are christians, they belong to God's family, and you are one with them, it matters not what particular Baptist church you may join. Baptist doctrines and principles ought to be so dear to you that any Baptist church would be dear to you; and this spirit would lead you to join promptly the church near to you, though it should be much weaker in many respects than the one from which you came. Admit that it is weak, and has many defects that your old church did not have; will you not let this fact dawn upon your soul, that the Lord may have sent you there to make it stronger. Does not the Great Captain of the Lord's hosts know when his line of battle is weak, and where his people are weak? and has he not sent you where you are needed? and yet you hold back and refuse to take hold, dodging duty, and doing the cause harm, by talking about the ties that bind you to your old home church. Brother, play the man, and when the Lord sends you to another field, buckle your armor, fall in with your brethren, weak or strong, and quit you in the conflict for right and truth like a man. And remember that you and your friends will enjoy your visits to your old home church if you have been faithful to the Master in the new field where your lot is cast.

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that some are actually too stingy to do their duty at home or in the new field to which they go. This we sincerely hope is not true of many of our people who fail to carry their church letters with them and to use them; but we fear it is true of some. Why a man should wish to belong to a church and yet be unwilling to bear some part of the expense of running it, is a mystery that can be explained only on the score of ignorance, or covetousness. If any who read these lines are among the stray Baptists, they should remember that, let their reasons be what they may, they lay themselves open to the suspicion of being considered covetous, or else ignorant. People are apt to think this, especially when our stray brethren are located in a community where our people are struggling to build a new house of worship, or to free themselves from the burden of a debt. And the trouble about some of the stray brethren thus situated is, they neither give at home nor at the place where their lot is cast. Sometimes these men wait until the local struggle is over, the church out of debt, and then they use their church letters, and unite with the church near them, offering some trivial excuse for the long delay. Ah, brethren, if you be not among those who act in this way, then act promptly, and do your duty. That duty is, as a rule, to join promptly the church nearest to you, especially where you are needed, when you go from one section to another. To claim to be a Baptist and refuse to contribute, at home, or where you are, ought to bring the blush of shame to any true man or woman's cheek.

Another cause yet may be mentioned, and that is the desire to be so freed from the restraints of church membership as to be at liberty to indulge in sins that would not be tolerated by the church near them, if they were actual members. Being away from the mother church, and not subject to the discipline of the one near to them, they feel at liberty to so conform to the customs of the world as to bring reproach upon the name of the Master. These stray brethren, that stray for the above reason, are often first at the ball, the theatre, &c., and when they thus begin to drift, it is hard to tell what the end shall be. It is a dangerous thing to thus stray from the fold, and from the shepherd's care, to eat of the forbidden fruitage of sin.

The remedy for all this lies partly with the churches and partly with the brethren of whom we speak. There are some churches, and pastors too, we fear, who, instead of encouraging the members that leave their churches and go elsewhere to call for their letters, rather encourage them not to do so; influenced again partly by the sentimentalism above mentioned about home ties, the mother church, &c. Would it not be better for such churches and pastors to be a little more candid, and add that they sometimes encourage them not to call for their letters, or, which is about the same thing, do not advise them to do so because they still desire their contributions.

Church rolls should be overhauled by competent committees occasionally, and when there are absent members that are living in other communities, especially those that have ceased to do their duty at home, and who have not called for their letters, they should at once be corresponded with and matters righted. The best cure for this trouble, however, is with our people who make the changes mentioned. Let them *always*, unless under very peculiar circumstances, call for their letters and place them with another church promptly when they reach their new homes.

The *Christian Index* of Atlanta, Ga., the most poorly edited Baptist paper in the South, in last week's issue presumes to criticize our use of capitals in the words "Judaism" and "Christianity." Glancing over his page in which the criticism occurs, a number of mistakes, as usual, presented themselves. We turned the paper over to two of our printers, and in a little while they returned it marked all over, and the entire margin, top and bottom and both sides, were entirely covered with marked errors, and on his editorial page over one hundred errors were marked. Many glaring errors in spelling in his leading editorial—the word "bigotry" was twice spelled "bigoty." Many errors in the use of capitals, errors in rulings, punctuations, and every conceivable thing. But the would-be critic outraged editorial courtesy in his effort to hold up a contemporary to ridicule before his readers by displaying his criticism in leaving out all capitals, and thus printing the name of our paper in small type. One hundred errors on a single page is a hundred times more excusable than a willful violation of every principle of courtesy. But we are charitable enough to think that it was the work of some irresponsible interloper who wanted to vent some spleen against us.

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PERSONALS AND OTHER ITEMS.

Rev. G. W. Harmon has been called to the pastoral care of the Baptist church in Weidon, N. C.

Rev. D. L. Moody, the evangelist, is to commence a meeting in Charlotte, N. C., to day (March 8th.)

Rev. A. A. Butler of Durham writes that his church is growing more and more hopeful and encouraging.

Rev. D. M. Austin, pastor of the Olivet Baptist church in Charlotte, N. C., has tendered his resignation.

Bro. C. R. Scott of Williams' Mills cheered us last Wednesday by a visit with a respectable club of subscribers.

Dr. Neil McKay of Harnett county, an able Presbyterian minister, died February 28th, aged about eighty years.

Dr. J. J. Hall gave the hand of fellowship to three persons on Sunday morning last at the Tabernacle church of this city.

Rev. G. M. Duke of Duke's, N. C., writes: "We have continued bad weather, which is hard on country preachers, but we are doing our very best."

We learn from the *Hickory Press and Carolinian* that Rev. Mr. Cashwell of Mocksville is conducting an interesting meeting at the Baptist church in Hickory, N. C.

Rev. G. H. Church of Bryson City, N. C., has resigned the care of the Baptist at that place, and speaks of coming east of the Ridge. Bro. Church is a good preacher.

Rev. Jno. H. Couch of Venner, Va., writes that he has been abundantly blessed in his field during the half year that he has been there; has baptized seventy-five persons in one of his churches.

A good many of the preachers of New York, Dr. Judson among them, have taken to using bicycles.—*Western Recorder*. From the sight of *old men on bicycles and old women trying to dance*—deliver us.

Rev. J. L. White, pastor of the First Baptist church, Asheville, N. C., will assist Dr. Mundy in a meeting at the First church, this city, (Greenville), beginning Monday, March 27th.—*Baptist (S. C.) Courier*.

Now is the time to send your name to the Corresponding Secretary of the Convention if you wish the Board of Missions to appoint you a delegate to the next session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Now is the time to order your Sunday-school supplies for the second quarter. You can see in another part of this paper the new statement by our own Supply Store in this city. Write them for all you need.

An interesting meeting is in progress at the Second Baptist church. The pastor, Rev. G. L. Finch is aided by Rev. T. J. Taylor of Warrenton, who preaches with impressiveness and power.—*Goldsboro Headlight*.

Rev. J. H. Lamberth, who has been preaching for the Baptist congregation here during the past month, left Monday to be absent a few weeks. He will return to Greenville by the first of April.—*Greenville Reflector*, March 1.

Bro. John M. Stoner of Charlotte, N. C., says: "The RECORDER has been very precious to me the past year: worth to me many times its cost. It is like good company—the more I associate with it the more of its good qualities I imbibe."

"To carry out the suggestion (Dr. Ellis for one Board) would be to destroy the Convention."—*American Baptist*. Few men can so conceal their real object, in a suggestion like the one Dr. Ellis made, that some of the brethren will not find it out.

The *Richmond Dispatch* gives an account of the revival at Grace Street (Dr. W. E. Hatcher's church) as being of unusual interest. Large crowds attend the meetings, and a great many go forward to confess Christ. The meetings are conducted by Dr. H. M. Wharton of Baltimore.

Rev. L. G. Broughton of Winston, N. C., writes: "I give you my hand on that editorial 'City Churches and Pastors.' Can't accommodate the folks Sunday nights of late, with all the chairs and the annex thrown open. We are holding our prayer service. Expect Thomas next Monday."

Rev. J. J. McLendon of Wolfsville, N. C., says: "Times are hard with us, but we would greatly miss the RECORDER. We have seven children, and we do not use tobacco nor whiskey. We are striving to live peaceable lives, 'in all godliness and honesty.' You are both prolific and of good habits, brother."

Rev. D. M. Austin, pastor of Olivet church, Charlotte, baptized six persons last Sunday night and received two others into the fellowship of his church by letter. The success of Bro. Austin and his mission church have been really surprising. It is a demonstration of what can be done by faithful and wise work.

A special meeting of the Anson Association will be held in the Baptist church of this town on Thursday of next week, March 9th, at 10 o'clock, to decide the question of a union of the churches of Anson and Richmond counties in one Association. It is possible that Dr. Powell of Mexico may be present to speak on missions.—*Wadesboro Messenger Intelligencer*, March 2.

Rev. O. L. Stringfield of Wakefield, N. C., expects to preach to his four churches this year, and in addition thereto give one-fourth of his time in aiding pastors and missionaries in protracted meetings. Bro. Stringfield preaches the pure gospel with great freshness and power, and we know of no better help in this State, a pastor desiring such aid could secure. He is to begin a meeting at our West End Mission next Sunday night.

Dr. W. D. Powell of Mexico was with Dr. Pritchard in Charlotte last Sunday, and passed through Raleigh on Monday on his way to Wake Forest where he was to speak Monday night.

The Populist chaplain of the Populist Senate of Populist Kansas, opened proceedings with this prayer, a day or two after the Populist defeat: "May God have mercy on this treason infected State. Amen." The Populists understood it one way, the Republicans another. We must await the decision of the Supreme Court for its application.—*The Independent*.

In the discussion of the Normal and Industrial School, located at Greensboro, before the House committee in this city, Feb. 21st, 1893, Maj. Finger is reported to have asked: "Why are these gentlemen here interfering with the business of the State?" This he said, referring to the Presidents of the denominational female colleges of the State. Remember it.

Rev. I. W. Thomas of Hibriten says: "We have just closed a good meeting of eight days at King's Creek church with ten additions—eight by baptism, one by letter, and one restored. The church was strengthened and united. Many penitents were left. Bro. C. E. Gower was with us first of the meeting, and did good preaching, and greatly endeared himself to the people. Bro. W. B. Beach, a young minister, and member of King's Creek church, aided me last of the meeting."

Diligence is a most commendable virtue. It lightens our burdens, strengthens our body, quickens our perceptions, enlarges our brain and adds to life's happiness. Richard Burke, after listening to a masterly effort of his brother Edmund, in the parliament of England, was found in deep thought by a friend, who asked him the cause of his sober thinking. He replied, "I have been wondering how Ned has contrived to monopolize all the talents of the Burke family, and I think I have solved the problem: when we were at play, he was always at work." This is an important lesson for our sons and daughters, and it is also important to christians.—*Alabama Baptist*.

The progress of the Baptist cause in France is one of the most remarkable religious movements of the present time. Although there are many additions to the Baptist churches by baptism, the chief growth is from another source. A considerable portion of the most evangelical elements in other churches seems to be on the point of coming over bodily to the Baptist ranks. Revulsion from the ritualism and corruptions of the Roman church, and the formalism and liberalism of the State churches has driven many of the most devout minds in France to the Bible, and this has led many to the Baptist position. A body of believers in Toulon and a whole church of one hundred members in Switzerland, with its pastor, have joined the Baptists. Quite a number of pastors from the Free Church have also come over and greatly strengthened the force of Baptist laborers in France. Even in priest-ridden Belgium a little Baptist church of fifteen members has been formed. Two hundred and twenty-two were baptized into the two Baptist churches in Paris the last year, and the outlook for the whole work is exceedingly encouraging.—*Boston Watchman*.

Important Facts.

The receipts of the Foreign Mission Board at Richmond for the last fiscal year of the Southern Baptist Convention to Feb. 15th, 1892, were \$63,598 67, and the total receipts for this year to Feb. 15th, are \$91,975.17. This is a gain over last year for the same months of \$28,376 40. In addition to this gain for the present year, Bro. A. F. Sellers of Texas has sent a deed to the Board for a house and lot valued at \$650 and also his note, payable in two years, with interest, for \$2,000, and Bro. James E. Meador of Kentucky has sent a deed for 640 acres of land in Texas valued at \$600.

FROM OUR NORTH CAROLINA CHURCHES

The total amount sent to the Board at Richmond to Feb. 15th, 1892, was \$3,191.08, and the total amount sent this year to Feb. 15th, is \$6,714 47. This is a gain from our North Carolina churches for this year over the same months in last year of \$3,523 39.

ONLY FIFTY-THREE DAYS

now remain to the close of this fiscal year. The last day of April at twelve o'clock noon the Treasurer of the Foreign Mission Board and the Treasurer of the Home Mission Board will close their books for this year. What is done for these objects must be done soon.

THE FOREIGN BOARD

is now overdrawn in bank \$30,000. This is on the regular work, and is the largest debt the Board has ever carried at this season.

THE HOME BOARD

is equally as bad off, and its needs are as important and pressing as the needs of the Foreign Board. We have not, however, the exact figures from the Home Board before us.

AT THE BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

held in this city in December last, our Board was then due its missionaries on work for the year ending Nov. 1st, 1892, the sum of \$3,127.48. Since that time, as you can see by the Treasurer's acknowledgments in this paper, only \$632.31 have been received for State Missions. This leaves us still due our State missionaries on work for the year ending Nov. 1st, 1892, \$1,445.17. What shall be done? When can these faithful men, who greatly need what is due them, be paid? Our only hope is to look to the churches.

THE FIRST QUARTER

on this Conventional year is passed, and one-fourth of the thirteen thousand dollars ap-

propriated on this year's work ought to have been paid.

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS

are still due on the Colored Institutes held last summer. Every pastor in the Convention, by voting for Bro. T. J. Taylor's resolution on this work, thereby promised to take one collection for it during the year. But less than a half dozen churches have sent anything to our Treasurer for this object since the Convention in Goldsboro. What shall we do? These are the facts. They ought to speak to us all.

DELEGATES

to the next session of the Southern Baptist Convention should be appointed at the next meeting of our Board of Missions. If you expect to go and wish to be appointed a delegate, write to me at once. The Convention is to meet this year in Nashville, Tenn., May 12-15. We will give the facts about railroad rates later. C. DURHAM, Raleigh, March 6, 1893.

An Arrow Head that has Hit.

In reading this week a religious paper—and one that I read with interest—I notice under the heading "Arrow Heads," what I think to be a poisoned arrow head.

At present, however, it is such a convenient fashion in replying to one who objects to anything said, to say, "The dog that howls is the one you hit," or "If the cap fits, wear it," that one with "sore toes" would, or at least should, be afraid to question or object to anything he reads. Yet with exposed toes and wearing the cap so far as it fits me, without waiting for such kind admonition from him who thinks such remarks effective armor either defensive or offensive, I proceed to speak. And even if I die from "trampled toes" and cap-wearing, I shall try to rub that arrow head, if perchance I may rub off at least a little of the poison before it penetrates too deeply. I hope, however, I shall not have a bad case of rabies. Here is the arrow head of which I speak:

"A dollar for the heathen and a kick for the tramp is a bad showing."

This admits of more constructions than one, it is true. And if it mean this, "Our blessings are so many that only a dollar for the heathen is a bad showing," and "Since God has been so kind to us who are miserable sinners, for us to be cruel and unkind to the poor and unfortunate, is a bad showing," then I heartily endorse and impel the shaft, if it will hit as intended and not from a bent point hit amiss. But if it means this, "To turn a professional tramp empty-handed from one's door, and yet give a dollar to the heathen, is a bad showing," then it seems to me to have been dipped deep in the poison, however unintentionally it may have been done. And it is a double pointed arrow from each point of which the poison escapes.

First, it tends to discourage mission giving. Second, it tends to foster pauperism and tramps.

It is a trite fact that the press largely shapes public manners and morals. Seldom are the readers of any one paper above that paper. Certainly a religious paper ought to lead in this great press work of developing the moral and religious manhood and womanhood of our land. As responsible are the positions we preachers try to fill, the christian editor has a more responsible position in this respect. Close scrutiny and devout armor should guide the religious pen. That pen makes an atmosphere in which is developed either vigor or weakness. If the family paper is careless of missions, so are the members of that family. If in a family naturally prone to quoting as Scripture, "Charity begins at home," the paper comes and says, "Better give the dollar to a tramp than to the heathen," the next mission collection will not get the dollar from that family. And when such a semi-hostile spirit to missions begins to percolate through some parts of North Carolina, it will require a miracle to prevent the annulling of many noble efforts; and many a penny that now goes to send light to the dark corners of the world will canker in the pocket of the church-member and go neither to the heathen nor to the poor (?) tramp. It is hard to build up but easy to pull down.

But aside from its tendency to hurt missions, it contains a positively injurious principle—a principle that does violence to all sound political economy. Teach men to support tramps, and you teach lazy men to become tramps. Encourage men to become tramps, and you encourage the civil, moral, and religious dissolution of your country. Nor is it a violation of charity to turn a professional tramp empty-handed from your door. This is true for North Carolina at any rate. Is a man old and feeble and hence unable to support himself? Where in North Carolina is there not a home provided for such at the public expense? Is it not degrading to become an inmate of such a home? Is it not doubly degrading to become a tramp, and degrading not only to the tramp but also to the community? Is it a poor, unfortunate orphan? And where are our orphan homes? Is it a shiftless wretch trying to beg his way from one city to another? And where is the charity in helping to shift upon an innocent and unforgiving community a worthless wretch who cannot or will not live a sober, honest life at home? Is it a poor woman whom misfortune has rendered unable to eke out a miserable existence? And whose foot has ever spurned her as a tramp? Is she a tramp? If so, then she is a fit object for the home provided for such unfortunate at the public expense. Here she can live a more respectable, honest, and satisfactory life than she can as a tramp, in which position she would become a wandering testimony of her own sad condition and a degrading and a poisoning element in the community. What poor, needy person is not provided for without developing a dangerous class of worthless vagabonds? Sound economy demands the suppression of tramps.

J. O. ALDERMAN.

Concord, March 1, 1893.