

BIBLICAL RECORDER.

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

Volume 66.

RALEIGH, N. C., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1901.

Number 24.

THE ERA OF GOOD FEELING; LET THE PEOPLE BRING IT IN.

Hoped for, prayed for, suffered for, voted for; heralded in clarion tones by our Governor and proclaimed as he entered his office;—the era of good feeling, overdue five months and more, is not yet in sight. This editorial is written here in hope that something may be done to hasten its arrival.

The entire State seems to have been inoculated with the virus of the spirit which was endured as necessary in campaigns of the past, especially of recent years; but which we hoped to be immune of after last August. Even the Supreme Court has been the scene of slings and snarls, which have only too well reflected the general state; and in very recent weeks the pent up feeling of the Justices have found utterance in public. We have no reference whatever to the impeachment proceedings, which are now in a stage where no one may wisely speak. Without going into the details, we may point out that with such a state of affairs in the highest region of the life of the Commonwealth, nothing very noble may reasonably be hoped for in the lower plane of ordinary politics. For Justices to fling at one another in decisions and public speeches is as unworthy as can be; and we make the statement without regard to parties, since slur and innuendo from one side has been answered by slur and innuendo from the other, while courts of other States have looked on with amazement. If it were simply a matter of denouncing a newspaper in pardonable defense of the Court, it would not be significant. That was merely an incident of the situation. Well informed citizens understand that the condition we refer to is far more grave, being the intensification of relations that have existed between the Justices for months, relations utterly unworthy of a high court,—relations that may not include every one of the Justices, but in which, it is no secret, the two leading political parties are respectively represented. One hesitates to fancy what an Ashe or a Ruffin might do could he return to the scene of those labors that were so high above politics and personalities, and see one Justice make a thrust at another in manner just a little more restrained than ordinary partisans use in joint debate.

Partisan rancor has indeed to a degree moderated in the body politic; but we can not say that the atmosphere is freer from denunciation and abuse of the most personal character. It is only too well known how defenceless our citizens have become against wanton insinuations and even open abuse and foul charges. We will not say more. In deprecating so unhappy a state of affairs this paper must beware lest it add fuel to the flames. Our conviction is that this sort of work will injure our State sadly. Such abuse can not be heaped up and such hatred can not be engendered without serious injury not only to its authors and the objects of their venom, but to our good old State. It is not simply a matter of individual safety, but of health in our Commonwealth. Her self respect can not survive everything. Her dignity and her fair name may not be carelessly handled. Rancor like this breeds the distempers which dwarf States and render their glory inglorious; dishonors citizenship, destroys brotherhood, paralyzes churches, and makes the ministry of no avail.

We had hoped that the little local feuds that have divided churches and harassed religious work in recent years would be dissipated in the light of nobler actions by the principals to the larger warfare. But so far there is no such encouragement. To be sure, the abuse is not strictly partisan, but it is none the less bitter and venomous; and the era of good feeling, for which many a minister has waited in fond hopes that it would restore peace to his congregation, seems almost hopelessly postponed. But it is not hopeless.

Those who have waited may wait no longer. By this time they ought to be able to identify the sources of this bitterness, and perceive with what design it is kept up. It is no longer a political matter; it is far from a party matter. If it were simply this we would not speak. It has come to be an affair in which those who love peace and dignity must say to those who would live by hate and abuse that they must cease from their ways, or receive the disapproval of men who really love peace. Waiting may give place now to a more active attitude. We have a right to demand, in God's name and for the peace of His churches and the progress of His cause, decency and the restoration of better feeling and more respect for our State and its people. The Era of Good Feeling will not come, we must now realize, until the authors of ill-feeling are taught the error of their way. We think it will be agreed that great forbearance has been exercised. If the sowers of serpent's teeth will not stop, those who respect themselves and love their State and her people and seek after peace must look about them for means to put an end to this hateful business.

On one hand is building now a sentiment which would make it hazardous for a citizen to protest against bitterness and hatred and passion, and the sad abuse of the glorious freedom of speech and of the press. On the other, then, must be built a sentiment that will suffocate in its strength and fulness the spirit of hate and the method of abuse, and foster self-respect, respect for one's State, and broad and brotherly fellowship of citizens one with another. Let us bring the Era of Good Feeling in.

Obligation.

BY JOHN J. DOUGLASS.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." Romans 1, 14.

Saul of Tarsus had been called marvelously and unexpectedly into the heart of an important ministry. His conversion had not come of his own seeking and through the slow process of reasoning. It had come suddenly, at midday, on the road to Damascus. It revealed to him the startling truth that he was a servant, instead of a master. This fact clearly outlined his future position and policy. In the most real sense it was to be one of servitude to the Master and to the world-at-large.

It is eminently true, therefore, that the sense of obligation is the sign of spiritual life.

He who does not feel burning within his heart the sense of obligation to his fellow man, may well question his own conversion. The unconverted man never feels that it is his duty to minister to the spiritual wants of others; it would be unnatural for him to be otherwise. Saul of Tarsus, holding the garments of them who stoned Stephen to his death, is a type of man unconscious of obligation. The Apostle Paul, willing to preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel to Greek and barbarian, wise and foolish, is the highest type of Christian manhood, because we see him fully conscious of obligation.

And then, again, obligation is not confined to class distinctions.

In the estimation of the apostle, Christianity placed him under obligation to the uncouth and uncultured barbarian, as well as to the cultured and refined Greek. His natural leaning to the best society was lost in the ardent longing of his great heart for the conversion of universal humanity. If Christ could offer to suffer and die for the barbarian and the foolish in human life, he could afford to live and labor for it. He who strives to set up an aristocracy of obligation in the kingdom of the Master, has grossly misinterpreted the spirit of Christianity and the language of its Founder, when He said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Wilson, N. C.

Baptist Polity Suited to Survive.

Let it be remembered that our Baptist polity is exactly suited to survive the fiercest persecution. A Baptist church is such a simple affair, that four or five people meeting in a cellar can fulfill all the required conditions. A persecution that would destroy all great ecclesiastical organizations, would simply send the Baptists into hiding places, where they could still maintain the polity and fellowship.—Selected.

What Constitutes a Baptist.

BY F. S. HENSON, D. D.

Seeing that there are denominations, there must needs be names to distinguish them, but these names, like those that are given to individuals, are often anything but descriptive of character. Let us hope that there is something more of the Episcopal Church than the episcopos, or bishop, and something more of the Presbyterian Church than a presbytery, and something more of Methodism than a method, and something more of Baptists than a baptistry. There are a great many things that we rejoicingly hold in common with all evangelical believers.

Gratefully do we recognize the fact that as the years go by we are coming to see more clearly eye to eye. Many of the things that were formerly distinctly Baptist have ceased to be so, because, thanks to the persistent propagandism of our Baptist fathers, the principles for which they stood so courageously, almost single-handed and alone, have now been almost universally adopted by all the churches of Christendom.

INFLUENCE OF OUR PRINCIPLES.

Take, for instance, the matter of soul liberty, the right of private judgment, and the absolute divorce of church and State. Baptists have always stood for that, and all Protestant Christians, at least in America, now stand for that; but they did not always do it, as witness the pains and penalties visited upon our Baptist fathers by the Pilgrim fathers in New England, and by the Episcopalians in Virginia. The like is true of the matter of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as a condition precedent to church membership. It is indisputably true that in countries where pedobaptism has universally prevailed, whole communities and nationalities have been included in the church, and that without any pretense of a change of heart, or any urgent insistence upon its necessity. In lands where Baptist principles have been actively propagated it has come to pass that pedobaptist churches, almost without exception, have come to coincide with us in the position that a change of heart must be experienced before one is properly qualified for citizenship in God's Kingdom on earth or in heaven.

It is in no spirit of vainglorious boasting that we seem to claim the credit for the changed front of Christendom with respect to an issue so fraught with far-reaching consequences. In all ages we have held the ground which we now hold. Sometimes we have held it against great odds, but now we mightily rejoice that Christians of almost all denominations have come to stand beside us on it. As to the Word of God, a long time our position was peculiar. We contended that it was the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We denied the legitimacy of the authority of popes and priests and ecclesiastical councils, or the binding force of the traditions of "the fathers"—properly called the fathers as being the progenitors of the most pestilent breed of heresies that ever cursed the world.

Other denominations do for the most part join in with us in echoing the reformation cry: "The Bible, the Bible only, the religion of Protestants," and yet we are constrained to say that they do not consistently and persistently adhere to this sound principle.

Their ablest and most scholarly men have been frank enough to concede the fact that the baptism of the early church was nothing other than immersion, and that there is not a trace in the New Testament of the baptism of any others than believers. And so they are obliged to fall back upon church authority and ecclesiastical tradition to furnish justification for the change of an ordinance of Christ's appointment.

A CLEAR DISTINCTION.

When the papal church mutilates and perverts the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, giving only a wafer to the laity and reserving the cup for the priesthood, we, in common with all Protestants, do solemnly charge that this mutilated thing is not the Lord's Supper at all; and when, on the other hand, our Protestant brothers substitute sprinkling or pouring for the beautifully symbolic and profoundly significant baptismal burial which our Lord appointed, we can not but deplore this departure from New Testament order, and we should be lacking in fidelity to our Lord and in love to our brethren if we did not lift our voices continually against it. If there be any one thing unequivocally clear from the Scriptures, it is that the baptism which Christ appointed is believer's baptism, and our contention is that if infant baptism were universally practiced, and it ought to be if it be right at all, then believer's baptism would be banished from the earth, and therefore we protest. Nay, more. We are assured that there

are three that bear witness on earth—the Spirit, the water, and the Blood; and these three agree in One. The witness of the Spirit is in the Word; of the water, in baptism; of the Blood, in the Supper. Each of these, if rightly used, contains the whole gospel. The Word contains it expressly, while the ordinances silently declare it in symbolic language. In the Supper we show the Lord's death—His body, His blood, and our reception of Christ by faith, that He is incorporated into our very being. In baptism we visibly represent His death and burial and resurrection, and our death to sin, and our resurrection to walk in newness of life. These are God's witnesses, and we have no more right to mutilate one than another. For the integrity of the Scriptures and the integrity of the ordinances we Baptists have always tried to stand.

As to the terms of communion, we are not aware that we hold any views that are anywise different from those which prevail in most pedobaptist churches. We simply maintain that the regular, natural, scriptural order is, first, faith; secondly, a profession of that faith in baptism, and the presentation of one's self at the table of the Lord.

THE RELATION OF THE ORDINANCES

Baptism is a symbolic representation of the beginning of the new life, and is therefore properly administered but once. The Supper is a symbolic representation of the sustenance of the new life after it has been begun, and is therefore frequently repeated. It is palpably apparent that the ordinance that symbolizes the birth should have precedence of the ordinance that symbolizes sustenance, and this was the order in the New Testament church. In this view we are quite at one with the great majority of pedobaptist churches. Both they and we are thoroughly agreed that baptism should precede communion. The difference between us lies in this: That they believe that almost any application of water may be accounted baptism, while we maintain that baptism is a burial only, and that sprinkling is not a burial at all. There is not the slightest difference between us and others as to the qualifications for communion, but simply as to what is Scriptural baptism, and yet just because we can not honestly concede that baptism is anything other than a burial, with singular unfairness and unbrotterliness we are perpetually charged with being "close communionists." Let us cease to bandy epithets and betake ourselves to the study of the Scriptures. We deeply deplore the existence of denominational divisions, and we do not believe that the crowning triumphs of Christianity will be won until our Saviour's prayer is answered, "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

But we shall not come to see eye to eye by shutting our eyes and blinking at the truth. Not by the cowardly surrender of honest conviction shall we ever attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, but by the surrender of prejudice and the abandonment of reliance upon human leadership, and a fearless and faithful study of the Word of God.—The Rams Horn, Chicago, Ill.

Let Baptists Give no Ground in the Fight for the Free Schools.

I want to thank you for your editorial in behalf of the public schools. Continue to stand by the schools. The politicians talk and make promises for them, but when the Solons at Raleigh go to make appropriations, they rather give money to some other institution which gives them a stronger pull among their fellows. The Baptists must give no ground in this fight, for our people are mostly affected by the schools.

There are too many appropriations by the Legislature; too many objects or calls for the State's money, unless there was more wealth in the State. Every institution must it seems, be kept on its feet by the State's money, and they continue to make new objects for State bounty.

The private pension bills are taking the money that ought to go to the schools. Many of them are doubtless without merit. My idea of education is to educate all the people as far as we are able, and then let those who can and have the inclination take all the extras they can afford. Technical education is all right, but it fits a man to earn money, and it is safe for him to spend money for it. The reform school would not be needed if the public schools were what they ought to be. E. S. MILLSAPS.

The pleasantest things in the world are pleasant thoughts, and the greatest art in life is to have as many of them as possible.—Ex.

On the Duty of Christian Giving.

BY ELDER HENRY SHEETS.

Christian giving is a subject which is very much misunderstood. By some it is regarded as a burden and disagreeable part of Christian duty. These people have yet to learn that it is a blessed privilege bestowed upon us by our Saviour, who said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Lord imposes no burdens upon His faithful followers, for His "yoke is easy." All that is required of us is, as a means of grace. He could, had His wisdom so directed, have given the gospel to the world through other agencies than calling His people to go to heathen lands and preach Christ to the people; but no, He would have saved men and women go to them, while the people at home give them needed support. Why this? Because we need the spiritual uplift that comes from such sacrifice, if indeed we dare call it sacrifice.

God's cause can and will go forward without mine or without our gifts, if we will not contribute; for His purposes can not fail; but can we get on and have heaven's approbation without doing our duty?

That the rich and well to do ought to give, is pretty generally conceded; but too often people get an idea that poor people, and especially those who are very poor, ought to be excused from the duty of supporting the church and all phases of mission work. And often there is a feeling manifested that a great favor has been granted to those members so excused. Who has a right to excuse members from this duty? Where is the Scripture exonerating any one from Christian beneficence? Paul, speaking by inspiration, said (1 Cor. 16:1, 2): "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do we. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." In the above he had "given order" that every one should contribute. None seem to be excused.

Dr. Gill, an eminent commentator, says: "The persons who are to contribute are every one, of every sex, age, state and condition, male and female, young and old, servants and masters, the meager as well as the richer sort."

When Jesus was watching the gifts that were being cast into the treasury, He said nothing of the large amounts given by the rich—He seemed to regard what they had done as a matter of course; but when the poor widow cast in her two mites, probably all that she had to live upon that day, Jesus at once called the attention of His disciples to this act of worship, and commended and emphasized it by saying that she had done more than all the others who cast in large sums. If the very poorest—and she seemed to be of that number—were ever to be excused, this, it seems, would have been the time. But instead, He shows that He was well pleased with the greatest self-denial on the part of the poorest of His followers; and as if to teach those who would, through mistaken kindness, rob the poor of the blessedness of Christian giving, the Holy Spirit has recorded His approbation of this act of hers. We fear that many Christians and churches are suffering spiritual death because of the neglect of this duty.

We can not hope for the largest measure of God's blessings while making little or no sacrifice to Him. Then let all our churches endeavor during this first year of the new century to secure a contribution from every member for our mission work, as well as general church expenses. Lexington, N. C.

Put it in Your Bible.

Here is a handy table furnished by the Christian World, which it would be well to cut out and copy for reference in your Bible studies:

- A day's journey was about twenty-three and one fifth miles.
- A Sabbath day's journey was about an English mile.
- A cubit was nearly 22 inches.
- A hand's breadth is equal to 3 1/4 inches.
- A finger's breadth is equal to about one inch.
- A shekel of silver was about 50 cents.
- A shekel of gold was \$9.
- A talent of silver was \$538.30.
- A talent of gold was \$13,809.
- A farthing was 3 cents.
- A piece of silver, or a penny, was 13 cents.
- A mite was less than a quarter of a cent.
- An ephah, or bath, contained seven gallons and five pints.

The Baptist Courier marks tersely a characteristic of human nature: "Liberality with other people's money and promptness to confess other people's sins are two virtues which survived the fall of the human race."