

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, TEMPERANCE, AND JUDGEMENT TO COME."

EDITED BY T. MEREDITH.

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA, HELD AT CAHILL MEETING HOUSE, BERTIE COUNTY, NOVEMBER 1-5, 1834.

(Continued.)

REPORT OF J. CULPEPER, Sen., Agent.

Elder John Armstrong, Cor. Sec. of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Dear Brother,—The time has arrived when you will of course expect some account of my labours during the last year, for the use of the Convention. Shortly after the close of the last meeting of your body, I proceeded to the Baptist State Convention of South Carolina; where brother Charles M. Allister, J. M. Allen, and myself, were cordially received, and enjoyed a pleasant, and we trust, a profitable interview with our brethren. We had an opportunity of explaining the several objects of your body, and describing our progress in their accomplishment. Our brethren appointed several messengers to represent them in your body. In returning, I visited some of the churches in the counties of Mecklinburg, Cabarrus, Montgomery, Rowan, and Davidson; and immediately commenced another tour in concert with brother James Thomas, in the lower end of the State. I visited the counties of Richmond, Robeson, Columbus, Horry, in South Carolina, where some of the churches belonging to the Cape Fear Association were situated, Brunswick, Onslow, Newhanover, Lenoir, Green, Edgecomb, Nash, Johnson, Wayne, Sampson, and Bladen, and returned home in the latter part of March. Early in April I set out on another tour through the counties of Moore, Chatham, and the western part of Wake, to meet brother Thomas at the meeting of the Board at Wake Forest in May. After the close of that meeting, I travelled in concert with brother Thomas through the upper and western parts of the State. I visited the counties of Granville, Person, Caswell, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Ashe. Returning, I visited the churches in Wilkes, some in Iredell, Davidson, and Rowan. Since that period, I have spent my time in visiting the churches in the counties of Anson, Montgomery, Moore, Chatham, Davidson, Mecklinburg, and Richmond. I have travelled 350 days; preached 233 sermons; attended, and assisted in administering the Lord's supper six times; assisted in three ordinations; have attended four protracted meetings, and several others of two or three days; and three Associations. I have at all times, and on all occasions, been careful to preach the gospel; and in an affectionate manner to explain the objects of the Convention, and of the Wake Forest Institute. While travelling within the limits of the Contentnea, Kehukee, Countryline, Mayo, Fisher's River, Abbott's Creek, and Bear Creek Associations, where we have been much misrepresented, and the people much opposed to what they erroneously conceived to be our plans, I have pursued a course in some measure different from some of my friends. Believing many of our opposing brethren to be well meaning but misguided men; who, when they know our real aims, will abandon their opposition, and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty, I have been much more solicitous to explain our real views, and describe our progress in their accomplishment, than I have been to form societies or make collections. I have left not a few warm friends, who were at my first interview, zealous opposers; and have found every intelligent person with whom I have conversed, highly pleased with the proceedings and progress of the Wake Forest Institute. In some of the churches, the state of religion is very low; but in many others, a glorious work is progressing, and extending its reforming, powerful, and harmonizing influence through the different grades of society. Hundreds and thousands are bowing in obedience to the Redeemer's standard, from the grey headed father, to the children in the Sabbath School of twelve years of age.

We have ascertained that there are in our State 27 Associations; and three others partly in our State and partly in South Carolina. Nineteen of these Associations approve of, and encourage the Institutions of the day. In these nineteen associations, 4278 persons have been added by baptism during the last Association year. The other eight Associations are generally opposed to all the benevolent Institutions patronized by us. In five of these bodies who publish their numbers, 180 have been baptized; some of the others do not publish their numbers. By comparing the number baptized, with the deaths and exclusions, our opposing brethren appear from their minutes for 1833, to have diminished, though the diminution is very small. In the missionary and anti-missionary Associations 4458 persons were baptized in the year 1833. We have seen but few of the minutes for 1834; but from the few we have seen, the increase appears to be nearly the same as last year. In these 27 Associations, including the three, of which part are in North and South Carolina, there are, it is confidently believed, nearly, if not fully, 30,000 Baptist communicants. In the unassociated churches we have not ascertained the number baptized, nor their whole number; but it must have been considerable. Nor should I be forgotten that there are in many, if not in all our congregations, many truly pious persons who are not attached to any church. Not a few of these approve of our proceedings, and are ready and willing to afford us aid. We have therefore abundant reason to thank God and take courage. Probably no person who was present at the formation of the Convention, or our first annual meeting, expected to see, at this early period, what we now witness—arrangements made to send the Gospel to nearly all the destitute parts of our own State, and affording no inconsiderable assistance to our Missionary brethren, who are travelling and preaching the Gospel to the benighted heathen in our own, and in foreign lands; a manual labor School established, possessing the confidence of the community,—offering instruction to seventy promising, and many of them, we hope, truly pious youth; and also affording gratuitous instruction to several of our young brethren in the ministry; and possessing ample funds for the instruction of more should they need it, and make the proper application. There are more than thirteen thousand dollars subscribed, and a part of it paid, for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings for the accommodation of the teachers, and students at the Wake Forest Institute. We may truly say that the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. But our work is not done. It is fully commenced, and our plans are in successful operation. One wrong step may produce much injury, if not entirely prevent the accomplishment of our purposes.

That you, my dear brother, and that every member of the Convention may be permitted to bear some humble, but successful part, as instruments in the hands of God in promoting and accomplishing all our laudable objects, is the fervent prayer of your friend and brother.

J. CULPEPER, Agent.

REPORT OF JAMES THOMAS, Agent.

Elder John Armstrong, Cor. Sec. of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Dear Brother,—Through you, I now proceed to give a brief account of my labours in North Carolina during this year, for the use of the Convention which I serve. And in doing this, I will first remark, that I have adhered strictly to the directions given the agents by the committee of arrangements for that purpose. I have made it my first object to preach the word of life; and then to explain and recommend to the notice of all, the different objects of the Convention. I have urged to the utmost of my ability their friendly co-operation with us in our work of love; the result of which is to be seen and known hereafter. From the state of things at the last Convention, and from the progress that all the plans of the body had made, with the success of the former agent in suppressing error, and in calling up the aid of many to the good work of the Lord, I thought it important that the next agents should visit, as soon as possible, all the churches in the State and secure their assistance; and to this object I have, with my venerable brother Culpeper, devoted my whole time and attention; except about five weeks which I spent in South Carolina. During those five weeks I was engaged in making preparations to serve your body,—in visiting the Baptist State Convention of S. C.—and the Welch Neck Association, together with several protracted meetings, where much good seemed to have been effected. In commencing my services for the Convention, I first visited the eastern and then the western parts of the State. During the journey, I travelled about four thousand miles; have visited most of the towns, churches, and villages in 44 counties, to whose inhabitants I have endeavored to preach, in my weak way, upwards of 400 sermons; and have often seen and felt the blessing resulting therefrom, for which I desire ever to feel grateful to Him, from whom all blessings flow. My appointments have been well distributed and generally well attended. During the year I have constituted four new churches, which are now doing well. One, at Lumberton, has increased from 25 to nearly 80 members, and is still in a thriving state. I have aided in five ordinations, and in seven administrations of the sacrament. I have baptized sixty-four individuals upon a profession of their faith in Christ; and have assisted in receiving the experience of more than a hundred others. While I have taken great interest in the promotion of the three leading objects of the Convention, I have not neglected to labour for the advancement of the cause of the Redeemer, by encouraging the benevolent institutions peculiar to our age; particularly those of Tracts, of Temperance, and of Sabbath Schools. In the course of the year I have distributed and sold

120,000 pages of tracts, together with 150 copies of the fourth edition of Dossey's Choice, which is now before the public for sale. I have assisted in forming 5 Sabbath Schools, in different places. This good cause is enlightening the minds and reforming the morals of many of our youth. The most of our churches have turned their attention to this subject, while a few are yet lukewarm, and rather frown upon the matter. Temperance now exerts a wonderful influence against the great enemy of the cause of truth and righteousness. In many parts of this State where thousands of gallons of ardent spirits were once made and used, there now abounds a spirit of sobriety. The east end of the State, so far as I can judge, now suffers most from the ravages of this common enemy. But the friends of temperance are up and doing. Some are wielding their pens and lifting the warning voice against the mighty foe. I have found but two villages west of the Roanoke, that have not a temperance society. Not only Christians, but many others now lend their aid and influence to this work.

About 125 dollars have been handed to me by different churches and individuals, for the use of the Convention; the amount, in the names of a few children, servants, and individuals, who have given some small sums in crowds, when it was out of my power to get their names. It has been my course generally to form subscriptions, embracing the three objects of the Convention, and leave them with such churches and individuals as seemed willing to aid us. About 24 dollars have been handed to me as a present to myself from different individuals, for which I desire to feel grateful; half of the amount I have cast into the treasury of the Lord to aid you in your good work. I have found that the labours of the former agent, with those of many of the missionaries of your body, have been much blessed in awakening sinners to a sense of their ruined state, and in rearing up the cause of Christ through the whole State. More than a thousand sermons have been preached in the State, by those sent out by the Convention, during this year. Special seasons of refreshing have been felt in many places under the labours of those friendly to missions. It is clearly seen that all those churches and religious bodies opposed to practical godliness and the missionary enterprise, are lean and dry like Gideon's fleece; while those decidedly friendly are growing and flourishing like the rose. This fact will be clearly seen by referring to the minutes of the different Associations. The spirit of opposition is, I think, rapidly yielding to the light of truth. I have heard but few individuals speak openly against the objects of the Convention; and I find those generally to be men, who were never at the Convention to see its movements, and who take not the Interpreter, nor are in the habit of reading the proceedings of the Convention.

In conclusion, I would say, we have great reason to thank God for his distinguishing favour bestowed on all the movements of your body.—Through you, my dear brother, I tender my thanks to the Convention for the attention and kindness shown to me. May the great Head of the church bless all our efforts for his own glory.

With great respect, I am &c.,

JAMES THOMAS, Agent.

REPORT OF THE BOARD.

The Board, in tendering their fourth annual report, feel sensibly affected with gratitude to the great Head of the church, for the blessing which has attended their efforts during the year that is past. At the last meeting of the Convention, the State was divided into twelve districts, and in each of which, a missionary was appointed, whose duty was to visit all the churches, and to labour especially in word and doctrine, in the more destitute regions of his district.

From brother Posey, of Macon county, a very encouraging letter has been received. He observes, "In three months I have preached ninety-one sermons. The effect I trust has been good. I have generally had large congregations as could be expected, and the people have generally appeared very tender. Mourners have come forward at nearly every call. Some have been enabled to rejoice in the Saviour, and have been baptized. I have not met with any opposition, but on the contrary, have been received cordially by my brethren, and am inclined to believe that all they need is information, in order to cause them to unite in the benevolent plans of the Convention."

Brother Kimsey, of Buncombe county, another of the missionaries, writes, that he has met with much opposition, but is by no means disposed to despair. He observes, "Strange as it may appear, I have found many who are total strangers to the ordinance of baptism, having never seen it administered, or heard it explained according to the gospel."

Brother Richards, of Iredell, writes, that he has travelled for the Convention ninety-three days, and observes, "I can certainly say that the cause of the Convention is gaining ground in this section of country. The Lord was pleased to bless my labours, and I have had indeed some precious seasons."

From other missionaries interesting details have been received. From some, however, who were appointed to preach in behalf of the Convention, no returns have been received.

The beneficiaries of the Board are pursuing their studies at Wake Forest Institute. Brother Jones has already made some considerable advance in acquiring a classical education. He is represented by brother Wait, as an amiable young man, ardently pious and uncommonly studious. Brothers Edwards and Pierce were received by the Board, at its meeting in May last. Brother Edwards is now at the Institute, and successfully pursuing a course of studies marked out by the principal. Brother Pierce, owing to some peculiar circumstances, has not been able, as yet, to enter the Institute; but he is expected to do so at the commencement of the next term. The Board are happy in stating, that the education fund is now ample, and that several other young ministers might be sustained without embarrassment. The Board would add that prosperity attends all the objects of the Convention.

In March, 1830, the Convention was organized at Greenville. It was then an infant indeed. Opposition all around us was exceedingly violent; but the few who had united at that important period, put their trust in the great Head of the church, and in his fear and strength they commenced a slow but steady advance. The first anniversary removed many of our apprehensions, animated our courage, and furnished us with strong evidence, that we should finally triumph over all opposition. Many excellent brethren came up to the help of the Lord. The measures adopted renewed our confidence in the cause in which we were engaged, and the unanimity which prevailed, strengthened our assurance that God was with us. The next year we found our strength still increasing. Many of our brethren who had been in the opposition, became convinced of their error, and came up to our help. During the meeting at Reaves' Chapel, it pleased the Lord to pour out his spirit upon the people; and the church from great feebleness has become a vigorous and active body. During that meeting the Convention adopted efficient measures for bringing into existence a literary Institution, adapted to the wants, and auxiliary to the objects of the Convention. At our last meeting, held at Dockery's meeting house, we rejoiced to see that our march was still onward,—that from the feebleness of infancy, we had reached the strength and vigor of youth. During the year that had passed, our missionaries had laboured with success; new churches had been established; the objects of the Convention had become better known, and more extensively approved; a farm for the Institution had been purchased, and every thing which the Convention had touched had prospered. The Lord indeed had done wonderful things for us, and while we rejoiced, we blessed his holy name,—for he had smiled upon our active zeal.

And now here we are again—sembled in the name and in the fear of the great Head of the church. As a Convention we have been in existence four years, and we may well say, *What has God wrought?* The past year has exceeded all others. Our missionaries and agents have traversed the whole State; and revivals have, in many places, followed their labours. During the past year, about 5000 persons have been baptized; and the denomination is rapidly increasing in strength, respectability and usefulness. The Institute commenced operations in February, and in September there were 70 students. Upon these young men the Lord has recently poured out his spirit; and we have reason to believe that from 35 to 40 have been hopefully converted to the truth. And the sons of some of the members of the Convention are among the blessed. We may all exclaim with gratitude and with joy, "The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad." Some of us asked for a blessing; others for a great blessing; and God poured out upon us an exceeding great blessing.

During the last four years much has been done,—the denomination has considerably increased,—it has, to some extent, combined its energies,—and is now exerting an influence, which must tend to promote the everlasting interests of thousands in our State. But much, very much, remains for us to do. There are many places in the State, which may with great truth be styled desert; where the rose never blossoms, where the flower never buds,—the brier and the thorn grow there. There are many places which once flourished like the garden spot, and brought forth fruit to the glory of God, but alas! the baleful, the withering influence of antinomianism, has produced desolation and death,—and though they were once like the paradise of God, they now look as if the pestilence had poured upon them. The fruit has been blighted in the bud, even the green leaf has become dry, and now the rank weed and the tall thistle grow there.

[To be continued.]

KAREN TRADITIONS.

The following account presents strong presumptive evidence that the Karens, who have recently manifested so much eagerness for the knowledge of the gospel in the Burman empire, are the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. The ten tribes who revolted under Jeroboam, after a succession of national disasters, were eventually conquered by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and carried captives eastward beyond the river Tigris. Since that period no definite knowledge has been preserved respecting them. The general opinion has been that they wandered eastward, and perhaps became blended with other nations. If it be true, as is now supposed, and as seems by no means improbable from the statement which follows, that the present Karens are really the remnant of the lost tribes of Israel; the fact must be regarded as one of uncommon interest. The following is worthy of an attentive perusal.

TAVOY, Jan. 4, 1834.

My dear brother: I have read the Pali Grammar nearly through the second time, and have found it so entirely diverse from all grammars of accidental language, that I delayed replying to your letter, intending to give you some account thereof. Pali is, however, so much of a secondary matter, and I find so much to do on "the missionary grindstone," more imperiously demanding my attention, that, hitherto, my purpose in this respect has been defeated. You are not, however, to suppose that I consider my labor in this department, a loss of time. By no means. The light it has given me on the construction of the Burman language, could not have been obtained by twenty years' study of the Burman alone. It may be safely said, that a philosophical knowledge of Burman cannot be obtained without a knowledge of Pali. But it is easier to laugh at Pali, than to study it.

I have now, however, a subject before me, more interesting than Pali. Mr. Maingy, the Civil Commissioner of these provinces, (i. e. the governor) being about to return to England, wrote to me, from Maulmein, requesting such an account of the Karen traditions as I could furnish him. The result was, the letter, a copy of which I sent you; and it will explain itself. The discovery of a fragment of the descendants of the Hebrews, under such pleasing circumstances of their conversion to Christianity, I consider an event of more than ordinary interest.

I was brought in from the jungle, on a litter, two weeks since. I am now, however, convalescent, and expect to start on a long and interesting journey among these sons of Abraham, as soon as possible. My life has been just saved, by medical skill and nursing; and whether I shall be able to endure the fatiguing journey before me, is known only to infinite wisdom. God, however, throws a sunbeam on the path of duty, and sets my heart at peace in relation to all future events.

"Yea, though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Mrs. Mason unites with me in Christian regards to Mrs. R., yourself, and all inquiring friends.

Yours, &c.

FRANCIS MASON.

The following is the communication to the Civil Commissioner, referred to in the preceding:

Head-waters of the Tenasserim, Dec. 6, 1833.

My dear Sir: I sit down in the midst of the Karen jungle to redeem my pledge, and give you some account of the traditions existing among the Tavoy Karens. These traditions are of two kinds, the one in verse, and the other in prose; the latter, in the form of commands from a parent to his children.

As what I have been able to obtain are but fragments of the original poems and instructions, I shall, for the sake of perspicuity, throw them together under different heads; and these naturally resolve themselves into three classes: I. Traditions of Scripture Facts. II. Traditions of Scripture Doctrine. III. Traditions concerning themselves as a nation.

I. TRADITIONS OF SCRIPTURE FACTS.

God.

God is denominated the great Ku-tsa, or the great Lord; the great Pu, or great ancestor, from Pu a grandfather; and Yu-wah.

"O my children and grandchildren! the earth is the treading place of the feet of God, and heaven is the place where he sits. He sees all things, and we are manifest to Him."

"Yu-wah is unchangeable eternal, He was in the beginning of the world: Yu-wah is endless eternal, He existed in the beginning of the world; Yu-wah is truly unchangeable and eternal; He existed in ancient time in the beginning of the world.

The life of Yu-wah is endless, A succession of worlds does not measure his existence, Two successions of worlds does not measure his existence; Yu-wah is perfect in every meritorious quality, And does not in succession on succession of worlds."

In the following passage, God is represented as saying, after having created the world, that he will destroy it in three generations; but men reply that they are not able to endure this, and beg that they may have every variety of suffering that now exists, rather than that the world should be burned up; to which request, it is understood God acceded.

"I have created the great earth, But in three generations I will burn it up; I have made this great earth, But in three generations I will set it in flames; I have formed the great earth, But in three generations I will destroy it with fire; I have established the great earth, But in three generations I will destroy it with flames;

O Lord, great God! The world-destroying flame we cannot endure, The world-destroying flame we are unable to bear; Let us exist with affliction in all its various forms."

Angels.

The Karens believe that there are beings in heaven, who have never sinned, and that they are employed in executing God's purposes. "The sons of heaven are holy, They sit by the seat of God; The sons of heaven are righteous, They dwell together with God; They leap against the silver seat of God, The beings whom God employs to execute his purposes, Have, to the present time, the reclining place of God."

Satan.

Satan is known by several names, among which, the most common are Ku-plau, the *deceiver*; from his deceiving the first man and woman, Yaw-kaw, the *necktrodden*; from the belief, that *may* will ultimately tread on his neck, or overcome him. The Karens believe that he was formerly a holy being in heaven: but that he disobeyed God, and was driven from heaven.

"Satan in ancient times was righteous, But he transgressed the command of God: Satan in ancient time was holy, But he departed from the law of God, And God drove him away: He deceived the daughter and Son of God, God drove you away, For you deceived the daughter and Son of God."

The Karens say that if a person died in ancient time, he came to life again after a short time, indicated, as in the following extract, by the plantain leaf becoming yellow. Satan, however, brought sin into the world, and man never rose again.

"The dead rose again when the plantain was yellow, But Satan produced sin: The dead rose to life when the plantain was yellow, But Satan introduced sin.

You have committed adultery against God; Hence, in this state, you are corrupt."

"Children and grandchildren! though you were to kill Satan, he would not die; but, when the time of our salvation comes, God will kill him. Because that time has not yet come, he still exists."

Fall of Man.

"O children and grandchildren! in the beginning, God, to try man, whether he would or would not observe his commands, created the tree of death and the tree of life, saying, concerning the tree of death, 'Eat not of it.' He wished to see whether man believed. Not believing, he ate of the fruit of the tree of death, and the tree of life God hid. Because the tree of life has been hidden, men have died ever since that time."

The Karens have no definite idea of what is meant by the tree of life coming by man, as mentioned in the following extract. It would seem, however, to refer to the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

"Temptation, temptation, the fruit of temptation, The fruit of temptation fell on the ground; The fruit of temptation was bad, It poisoned to death our mother; The fruit of temptation, 'Do thou eat it not,' In the beginning it poisoned to death our father and mother;

The tree of death came by woman, The tree of life by man."

"Two persons, our father and mother, Disobeyed the commands of God; In ancient times, our mother and father Transgressed the commands of God, This transgressing the commands of God, Descends to their children, who are evil-doers; Unto breaking the commands of God, Satan destroyed them; They broke the commands of God, Satan destroying them."

The Karens believe that woman was originally made of one of man's ribs, and have the popular idea among them, that a man has one rib less on one side than on the other.

"O children and grandchildren! woman at first was a rib of man; therefore woman ought to obey man in all things."

Dispersion at Babel.

"Men were all brethren; They had all the language of God; But they disobeyed the language of God, And became enemies to each other. Because they disobeyed God, Their language divided, God gave them commands, But they did not believe them; and divisions ensued."

Destruction of the World.

The Karens believe, that the world will be destroyed by fire; and several brief allusions to this belief occur in their poetry, of which the following is a specimen:

"The waters will rise, and the world-destroying flames will burst forth, And must not men then watch?"

II. TRADITIONS OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES.

Love to God.

"O children and grandchildren! love God, and never so much as mention his name; for, by speaking his name, he goes farther and farther from us."

Prayer.

"O children and grandchildren! pray to God constantly by day and by night."

Repentance and Prayer.

"O children and grandchildren! if we repent of our sins, and cease to do evil, restraining our passions, and pray to God, he will have mercy upon us again. If God does not have mercy on us, there is no other one that can. He who saves us, is the only one God."

Against Idolatry.

"O children and grandchildren! do not worship idols or priests. If you worship them, you obtain no advantage thereby, while you increase your sins exceedingly."

[Remainder in our next.]