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For the Advocate.

Rev. J. E. Mann and Division
The Unanswerable Argument—Our so-called Obligation to Divide.

BY REV. S. D. ADAMS.

Shall we divide, or not divide? That is the question, and a vital question it is. In fact it is becoming very lively and should be met in the spirit of candor and fairness. An insinuation of personal interest and impure motives should not have a place in this discussion. That would be naughty. And a desire to disregard any assumed obligation in regard to the division question, should not be attributed to any one, because he may hold opinions opposed to those of the other side. That would be ugly, very ugly indeed. I would feel my self-respect deeply wounded if I could not differ in opinion from a brother, without insinuating that he is controlled by personal considerations. I know I am honest in my opinions on this issue, and I heartily concede the same honesty of purpose to those of the other side, however much I may question the correctness of their judgment.

So far as I am personally concerned, I would be willing to trust the issue to the sound judgment of the Conference without further discussion, but as the very life of the division sentiment seems to depend on agitation, that is not likely to be. We must meet the issue as it is.

The appearance of the speech of the Rev. J. E. Mann, P. E. of the Newbern District, and delivered before the District Conference at Morehead, with attendant circumstances, would seem to demand attention. But what are the attendant circumstances?

First, he left the chair, where he was placed by the law of the Church, and volunteered his services to advocate a division of the Conference. That he had a right to do so, no one will question, but he well knew that in so doing he would bring all the influence of his official position to bear, and in that way he would gain a hearing under most favorable circumstances. In addition to that he well knew that no one in the Conference was so favorably conditioned to make an impression as he, and the opportunity was turned to advantage. Then there was an endorsement and request for publication.

These circumstances indicate that his speech was not to rest solely on its merits, the strength of its logic, the correctness of its statements, and the pathos of its pleas, together with the acknowledged prudence and candor of the speaker; but that it should be given to the public under these most favorable circumstances and in that way, and to that extent, be made a sort of leading document to aid in forming sentiment in favor of division. Bro. Mann does not stand side by side with his brethren in this regard, but in thus coming before the Church he has decided advantage, which no doubt he appreciates.

But even all that would not have induced me to write, had not that speech made its appearance at the Fayetteville District Conference, just at the opening of its session, publicly announced as containing arguments simply unanswerable, and as coming from a man remarkably careful and conservative, and in that way was used to impress the mind when there was no time to examine it, and no opportunity to answer its arguments. Now it has been examined. Hear the other side.

But what of the speech and its unanswerable argument?

I have not read all that has been written on this subject, but I do say in all candor, that of all I have read, no communication contains a more glaring misapprehension, or misapplication of facts, as contained in the official record, than that speech. Let us look well to this, and we shall see.

Bro. Mann's first argument is thus presented. He says, "I am in favor of a division of the N. C. Conference:

First, because the forming of a Western N. C. Conference would be in accordance with the real and expressed object of the cutting off of the Charlotte and Shelby Districts from the South Carolina Conference in 1870."

That might be strong as an assertion, but as an argument it scarcely has the reality of a dream of the night, much less of actual existence. The facts are against it, and facts are still very stubborn things and will not yield to the assertion of any man. More than that, The facts are official, historic, recorded and unyielding. Bro. Mann finds the proof of his assertions in the newspapers of 1870, containing resolutions, appeals, and petitions asking for the formation of a Western N. C. Conference. The facts

are found in the official records of those days. It is then, Bro. Mann and his assertions drawn from the newspapers on the one side, and the facts taken from the official record on the other. And now I say:

The transfer of the Shelby and Charlotte Districts from the South Carolina Conference to the N. C. Conference was absolute and unconditional, and by that transfer became in every sense, and as thoroughly a part of the N. C. Conference with all the rights and privileges of the Conference as any part of our territory. Let no one wince or cringe at the assertion. It is so and must stand. Then to the record:

In 1869 the N. C. Conference had no action on the subject of the transfer of the Charlotte and Shelby Districts to our Conference. Here are the facts from the Journal of the General Conference for 1870, and they cannot be denied:

The Gen. Conference met in Memphis on the 4th day of May 1870. On the 9th, Dr. B. Craven, President of Trinity College, presented a petition from members of the Church in Charlotte, N. C. praying to be transferred to the N. C. Conference. Referred to Committee on Boundaries. See Gen. Conference Journal, Page 177. Not a word about a Western N. C. Conference.

On the 19th of May the Committee on Boundaries presented the following report:

"N. C. Conference shall be bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; on the north by Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River to its intersection with the Virginia State line, and by said State line, (but including Union Church in Mecklenburg county Va.) to the Blue Ridge; on the west, by the western boundary of 'Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke, McDowell, Rutherford, and Polk counties to the South Carolina line; and on the south by the State line of South Carolina to the Ocean." See Gen. Conf. Journal, Page 290.

This boundary included the Charlotte and Shelby Districts. Not a particle of condition there; not a word about a Western N. C. Conference.

This report was under consideration when Dr. Shipp moved that it be re-committed. His motion was laid on the table. Then comes the only thing said about a Western N. C. Conference. Dr. Shipp and H. A. C. Walker offered an amendment providing for the formation of a Western N. C. Conference. That amendment was laid on the table. Then Drs. Shipp and W. Smith offered the following amendment:

"Resolved, That the boundaries of the N. C. and the South Carolina Conferences remain as heretofore."

That was also laid on the table. Then the report, as it came from the hands of the Committee, was adopted.

While Dr. Shipp's proposition to form a Western N. C. Conference was pending, we learn from the daily paper published during the session of the General Conference, that our Dr. N. F. Reid made the following remarks, which will throw some light on the matter:

Dr. N. F. Reid said: "I wish to set the North Carolina Conference right on this question of boundaries. I understand Dr. Shipp to say that we were committed to his plan of a Western N. C. Conference. He explains now that he did not mean to be so understood. We came here without any definitely formed plan. We came here with a purpose to rise above all local prejudices, and give our support to that measure which, in our judgement, should best promote the interest of Methodism in the Western part of our State. We were anxious to preserve the peace with our brethren of South Carolina and Holston. We wished to avoid everything that would stir up strife and irritation in any portion of the territory in question. To this end we invited a conference with the South Carolina and Holston delegations. In this conference, which was free and pleasant, we said to the Holston delegates that, whilst we thought it would be best to form a Western North Carolina Conference, to embrace that portion of the State lying within their bounds, yet, if it would seriously damage them as a conference, and begot hurtful strife and disaffection in that portion of their work, we would not urge it. We told the South Carolina delegates that if their people in our State did not want to be ceded to our Conference we did not want them. That we had no idea of thrusting ourselves as pastors upon any people who preferred others, and we separated from this conference with the understanding that the matter was at an end for the present. Subsequently, it came to our knowledge that the interests of the church in portions of that territory required that some action should be had. We had a large petition from Charlotte, praying to be transferred to the North Carolina Conference. It was represented to us by a South Carolina representative that something must be done, or our church would suffer. We then, as a delegation, held a conference with the South Carolina delegates, and canvassed the subject again. We agreed, in this interview, that Dr. Shipp and myself, in connection with our representative on the committee on Boundaries, Rev. Mr. Bobbitt, should call on the Holston delegates again,

with the agreement that if they did not consent to the formation of a Western North Carolina Conference, embracing their part of the State, then South Carolina would consent to the transfer to us of all their territory lying in our State. Holston still refused, and Rev. Dr. Walker, representing that evening his Conference on the committee on Boundaries, recommended the transfer in accordance with the above agreement. The transfer was accordingly made by the committee, and as the question was before this conference. After all this, Dr. Shipp comes here and proposes a plan for a Western North Carolina Conference with a remarkable eastern boundary. I believe, Mr. President, that this Conference has now the opportunity of settling forever this question, and there is no mode of doing so more proper, in my judgment, than by the adoption of the report of the committee. I appreciate the feelings of our South Carolina brethren. They dislike to part with their territory. They go forward and then backward in doubt what to do, yet the force of facts is bearing us all to the conclusion of the committee, and I trust that Dr. Shipp's amendment will be voted down, and the report of the committee, the result of a fair and impartial investigation of the whole subject, will be adopted."

As before stated Dr. Shipp's amendment was laid on the table. It will not do to say that territory was transferred with the understanding that we divide. Who had the understanding? Where are the parties to the contract? Do not talk about newspaper articles in the face of official action. That some brethren then desired the formation of a Western N. C. Conference is not questioned. They wrote about it, talked about it, and faithfully labored for it, but all that did not place the Conference under any obligation to divide. I repeat, and would emphasize the fact, that the Charlotte and Shelby Districts came to us without any conditions, either expressed or implied, on the part of our Conference that we would divide. If there were any outside or private understandings to that effect, they are not binding on the Conference, and I know nothing about them.

But Bro. Mann makes another assertion which, coming from him with all his prudence and caution, is perfectly astounding. It shows what mistakes a cautious man may make when he travels beyond the record. It is contained in the following sentence: "The formation of the new Conference, with any discretion as to time allowed was committed to the N. C. Conference, because the new Conference was to be in N. C. and the N. C. Conference was so clearly and openly committed to the formation of the New Conference." Mistaken, wrong, badly wrong. The facts are against him. When the Shelby and Charlotte Districts were transferred to us, our Conference was committed to nothing, for it had never taken action on the subject. We were as free in that regard as the "fowls of the air."

The great mistake of Bro. Mann is in confounding individual utterance with Conference action, and in that way holding the Conference responsible for what some man said in the papers. But what in regard to the assertion that any discretion as to time for forming the new Conference was allowed. Who ever heard of such a thing before in the history of the Church? Any discretion as to time? Then we have nothing to do but to assemble in Conference at Charlotte next Fall, pass a resolution to divide, and the work is done without any further action of the General Conference. How Bro. Mann, with his caution, could be led into such a mistake I cannot tell. But it shows, at least, that he may make mistakes as well as other men.

Here are the facts, you see I am after the facts. After the report of the Committee on Boundaries was adopted, and the Charlotte and Shelby Districts were transferred, and that matter was settled, Rev. F. M. Kennedy, of the South Carolina Conference, and Dr. N. F. Reid of the N. C. Conference, presented the following resolution which was adopted:

"Resolved, That the N. C. Conference is hereby authorized to form a Western N. C. Conference at interim if in their judgment the interest of the Church requires it in the next four years—the presiding Bishop concurring."

The four years passed away, the N. C. Conference did not think the interest of the Church required a division and the privilege expired. That is all there is of it. As I understand the matter, there was an expressed desire within the bounds of the transferred territory, to be formally and officially connected with the N. C. Methodism, that it might be brought into closer union and sympathy—that it might be unified. And that is the reason the transfer was desired and obtained. But Bro. Mann manifests a great deal of sympathy and pathos as he appeals to the Conference not to repudiate its obligation to divide. But where is the obligation: how did it originate? Having failed to find it in the action

of the General Conference, we are told it may be found in the Journal of our own Conference.

He comes to the action of the Conference at Salisbury, and gives us the record—in part. Before I examine that report, I wish to inquire. Will Bro. Mann stand by the action of his Conference? Will he to-day ratify and re-affirm the sentiments contained in that report? He quoted approvingly, and indorsed in his speech that report. He cannot go back on it. He surely would not if he could. Then let Bro. Mann come and take a stand at my side, and we will both stand on that report, and together we will stand, or together we will fall. But surely after all he has said in regard to repudiating an obligation to divide, and quoting and endorsing that report in part, he cannot go back on it, or any part of it. That would make him do the very thing he is exhorting others not to do. But to the report. He says: "When we reached Salisbury it seemed to be the universal wish to divide. The unanimity was rare in a body, so large and a question so important." A Committee on division was appointed, it was in session four days, with open doors, seeking light and brought in a unanimous report which was adopted. See Journal of Conference at Salisbury, 1877. The report is too long to transcribe.

This report contains too distinct parts. The first is a process of reasoning by which a conclusion is reached. The second is, The conclusion arrived at. Bro. Mann gives the reasoning without the conclusion. As the conclusion reached is the most important part of the report, I will now furnish that. It is a resolution in the form of a memorial to the General Conference. Why did Bro. Mann fail to give it? Here it is:

"Resolved, That we as a Conference memorialize the General Conference to meet in Atlanta, Ga., in May next, to transfer to the N. C. Conference all the territory in the State of N. C. within the bounds of the Virginia and Holston Conferences. But if in the wisdom of that Body they should refuse the request to transfer us the territory of the Virginia Conference in this State, and will transfer us the territory of the Holston Conference within this State, we request that a division be made, the line running along the Eastern boundaries of the Charlotte and Shelby Districts on the East and with the State lines of N. C. Westward."

The leading thought of this Report is division. But how divide? By cutting the present territory into two equal parts? No, not at all. That never entered the minds of the Committee. How divide? The Committee tells us. There is but one way suggested. It contains two conditions. First, Get that part of our State now in the Holston Conference. Second, Divide on the line presented in the memorial, which is substantially the same as the one agreed on in the compromise at Greensboro in 1870, and the only line that has ever been agreed on. Now, where is Bro. Mann? Will he stand by the Report of the Committee, or will he, after exhorting others not to repudiate an obligation to divide, repudiate it himself? I want Bro. Mann to "tote fair" now, and stand by the record he has, in good faith, helped us to make. Let no one make an effort to repudiate our repeated action and disregard a recorded obligation by attempting to manufacture sentiment in favor of division, in positive disregard of the action of the Conference. According to that Report, without the territory in the Holston Conference, you cannot in fairness divide. That territory is just as certain to become attached to a Conference in N. C. as the N. C. Conference is to divide. Suppose you divide the present territory into two equal Conferences, it does not call for the eyes of a prophet to see, as the territory in the Holston Conference will come, that in a few years the West will have a very decided advantage in acquisition of that territory. I make no protestations of disinterestedness. I am concerned. The interest involved is great. A mistake in precipitating action may do immense damage.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Entering a Pew.

The following, which is going the rounds of the papers, contains good advice for a man to go to church, besides expressing our sentiments to a dot: Having entered a pew, move along. Do not block up the end of the pew as if you did not intend to have any one else enter it, or as if you were holding it for special friends. Do not rise to let others in, but move along and leave the pew invitingly open, so that they will know that they are welcome. If a pew holding six has five already in it, do not file out in formal procession to let one poor scared woman go to the farthest end, but move along, and let her sit down at the end next to the aisle. It is not necessary now for a man to sit at the end ready to rush out and kill Indians, as possibly it was once.

For the Advocate.

Our Georgia Correspondence.

BY REV. G. G. SMITH.

A FEW DAYS WITH ONE OF THE FATHERS. Immediately opposite my front gate is a Catholic College. Father Bazin, the Chancellor, is a short, stout genial Frenchman, a Priest, member of one of the numerous orders. He and I are good friends, and the other day I took from his Library a book I had long wanted to read: "The Confessions of St. Augustine." It is published by D. & J. Sadler, New York, and sells for about one dollar—with the African Bishop for several days I had a very pleasant association, as I sped along over the steel rail.

CARTHAGE. Carthage! Where is it? How long since its last ruin crumbled to dust? Where the Romans ruled and where there were schools of rhetoric and philosophy, the wild Moor has his Savage count. While Carthage was in its glory, where was America? Was the forest still trackless? Did the mound builders who left no record, save piles of clay, and heaps of dust, and whose grinning skeletons, say naught except that they were men like ourselves, did they hunt the bison, and the deer, and chase the tiger to his lair, or perhaps hunt the woolly Elephant, or the Gigantic Mastodon, whose bones we find deep buried in our clay, and who perhaps still roamed through our canebrakes and jungles. Now as I talked again with Augustine I found Churches in every village, and beautiful towns and flourishing cities along the way, and deer and buffalo and panther, and Mastodon, all gone and mound builder and Indian no more to be seen, and yet I, an American Protestant, was holding pleasant intercourse with the Catholic Saint. Human hearts are the only things which never change and the Bishop of Hippo, and of Carthage was truly my brother in heart as though he had lived yesterday. Perhaps there were few things about which we would have agreed. He thought the world was flat. He did not know anything of chemical combinations. He had never heard of an electric battery. He did not know the blood circulated. He did not know the world revolved about the sun. He knew nothing of Biology, of proto plasms, or of Mr. Beecher and Evolution, but he felt just like I did, I could enter into his feelings as he expressed them.

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He was an African, but not a negro. His Mother Monica was surely one of the most saintly women of the world, and one of the most charming parts of his Confessions relates to her. She was educated religiously by an old and favorite slave, and was a very decided Christian from her marriage with Patricius. He was a hot headed, passionate sinner, and she was a gentle, forbearing, tender wife. Augustine gives rather a dark picture of the domestic life of those days in the early part of the 4th century, when husbands left on the faces of their wives marks of their anger.

The Confessions begin with the beginning of his life. He recognizes the sinfulness of his earliest childhood and confesses, at length the sins of his boyhood. The chief thing however he alleges against himself was stealing some pears, he had no use for, and being ambitious and vain. He seems to have had the best opportunities for study and was thoroughly drilled and soundly flogged by his masters. His studies were almost entirely in the direction of Grammar and Rhetoric, very much such studies as are prosecuted at Eton and Rugby to day, and in any of our classical schools. He was not baptized; his father was merely a Catechumen when Augustine was a child. Augustine was himself a self-conceited, pleasure loving, young Philosopher. We see such in every College in the land. He knew everything and he became a Philosopher after the order of the Manicheans. They seem to have been a sect of Rationalists. They knew everything, and what they could not explain was inexplicable. They were great heretics of course. They took from Christianity the truths that suited them and the phrases they liked and made them fit into their system. Mr. Beecher would have been their high Priest, for while he would not have explained things in the same way they did, he would have explained them all like the Manicheans did, would get rid of the moral law, and of hell.

Augustine does not seem to have been a bad man, considering the times in which he lived. He was philosophical, skeptic, perhaps a little more Orthodox than Emerson, and almost as moral in his outer life, but he was far from being a Christian. His mother still prayed for him, and had a vis-

ion which assured her of his conversion. He became a Manichean when he was 19; he continued one till he was 28. He says they deceived the people openly by what they call the liberal sciences, secretly by the false name of religion. He was now a teacher of Rhetoric, and a full fledged Scientist. He studied Astrology, and the Platonic Philosopher, but finally was led by the preaching of Ambrose, to see the beauty of Christian truth and longed to believe it. The Manicheans he said ridiculed believing, and promised demonstration, but after all they accepted things the most fabulous and absurd. There was another sect, the Agnostics of that time, or as they called themselves the Academics, who said nothing could be known. Tossed about on these waves of doubt, Augustine presents the same spectacle presented 15 centuries later by the whole army of skeptics. Agnostic, Materialist and Transcendentalists in America and in England. At last he saw Jesus and when he did he saw his own wicked heart, and his own wicked life. His conversion was like that of many a Methodist who never heard of the great philosopher. He was broken hearted, weeping under a fig tree, crying for mercy, and deliverance, when a voice said, "Tolle Lege." He arose and went into the house to take up the Bible. His eye fell on a passage: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus." He did it, he was converted—happily, thoroughly before Baptism and without ever confessing to a Priest. Monica rejoiced and not long after full of faith and joy, getting nearer and still nearer to God, saint that she was, passed triumphantly to Heaven.

In reading these confessions one will be profoundly impressed with the utter vanity of any mere human effort to provide for itself a satisfactory religious philosophy. We are having quite a revival in the philosophic world. Many men are making a religion for themselves. They take such parts of Christianity as suits them and form a kind of Mosaic concern, which is neither Christianity nor philosophy, but is a religion which accords with the views of the man who made it, and which he calls Christianity. There has been much advanced since the early years of the 5th century in exegesis, much now known of which the world was ignorant then of physical science, but in the realm of pure reason, when the mind searches in its own depths for truth there is but little advance, perhaps none. The province of reason is better defined, that is all, those young preachers or old ones, either who have left the realm of Exegesis, and gone into that of Philosophy, with the vain hope that they will understand all mysteries might do well to follow the great African in his devious ways, and see how vain is human effort to arrive at the wisdom of God.

One who reads these confessions in the light of modern Church History will be struck with the purity of the faith and the simplicity of the worship in the first half of the 5th century. The gorgeous ritual of Catholicism was not then. The doctrines of the Sacramentarians were not then, though the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration was. The Auricular Confession was not. Image worship and Mariolatry was not, indeed Augustine never alludes to the Virgin Mother at all. The views of self-abnegation, and self-annihilation which obtained among the later mystics, are there, and the reverence for Asceticism is there, but a Methodist preacher may read the Confessions through and he will feel very much like they were written by a Methodist.

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Augustine does not seem to have been a bad man, considering the times in which he lived. He was philosophical, skeptic, perhaps a little more Orthodox than Emerson, and almost as moral in his outer life, but he was far from being a Christian. His mother still prayed for him, and had a vis-

ion which assured her of his conversion. He became a Manichean when he was 19; he continued one till he was 28. He says they deceived the people openly by what they call the liberal sciences, secretly by the false name of religion. He was now a teacher of Rhetoric, and a full fledged Scientist. He studied Astrology, and the Platonic Philosopher, but finally was led by the preaching of Ambrose, to see the beauty of Christian truth and longed to believe it. The Manicheans he said ridiculed believing, and promised demonstration, but after all they accepted things the most fabulous and absurd. There was another sect, the Agnostics of that time, or as they called themselves the Academics, who said nothing could be known. Tossed about on these waves of doubt, Augustine presents the same spectacle presented 15 centuries later by the whole army of skeptics. Agnostic, Materialist and Transcendentalists in America and in England. At last he saw Jesus and when he did he saw his own wicked heart, and his own wicked life. His conversion was like that of many a Methodist who never heard of the great philosopher. He was broken hearted, weeping under a fig tree, crying for mercy, and deliverance, when a voice said, "Tolle Lege." He arose and went into the house to take up the Bible. His eye fell on a passage: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus." He did it, he was converted—happily, thoroughly before Baptism and without ever confessing to a Priest. Monica rejoiced and not long after full of faith and joy, getting nearer and still nearer to God, saint that she was, passed triumphantly to Heaven.

In reading these confessions one will be profoundly impressed with the utter vanity of any mere human effort to provide for itself a satisfactory religious philosophy. We are having quite a revival in the philosophic world. Many men are making a religion for themselves. They take such parts of Christianity as suits them and form a kind of Mosaic concern, which is neither Christianity nor philosophy, but is a religion which accords with the views of the man who made it, and which he calls Christianity. There has been much advanced since the early years of the 5th century in exegesis, much now known of which the world was ignorant then of physical science, but in the realm of pure reason, when the mind searches in its own depths for truth there is but little advance, perhaps none. The province of reason is better defined, that is all, those young preachers or old ones, either who have left the realm of Exegesis, and gone into that of Philosophy, with the vain hope that they will understand all mysteries might do well to follow the great African in his devious ways, and see how vain is human effort to arrive at the wisdom of God.

One who reads these confessions in the light of modern Church History will be struck with the purity of the faith and the simplicity of the worship in the first half of the 5th century. The gorgeous ritual of Catholicism was not then. The doctrines of the Sacramentarians were not then, though the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration was. The Auricular Confession was not. Image worship and Mariolatry was not, indeed Augustine never alludes to the Virgin Mother at all. The views of self-abnegation, and self-annihilation which obtained among the later mystics, are there, and the reverence for Asceticism is there, but a Methodist preacher may read the Confessions through and he will feel very much like they were written by a Methodist.

Children at Home

Real children would as soon expect the sky to fall as to find the door of home shut against them. Whatever they be doing the sense of home abides in their hearts. Even when they do not consciously think of it, it is always there as an underlying comfort. They will go to it from school, from work, even from play; talking all the way to their companions, thinking, one would say, of any but home. But see how steadily they go towards it all the while; they take no step out of the way. And when they come in, how naturally and easy they seem to take possession of the place. It is theirs; they never think of leaving it (that may come later, naturally, and bring sadness with it)—children, never think of it. Leaving home! Father and mother might leave it, but they never. This the feeling in very truth. Of course, we must drop some of human accompaniments, some of the small exterior that do not belong to it in making the higher application; but that is the feeling, substantially, which God wishes us to have in thinking of Him and His presence.—Alex. Raleigh.